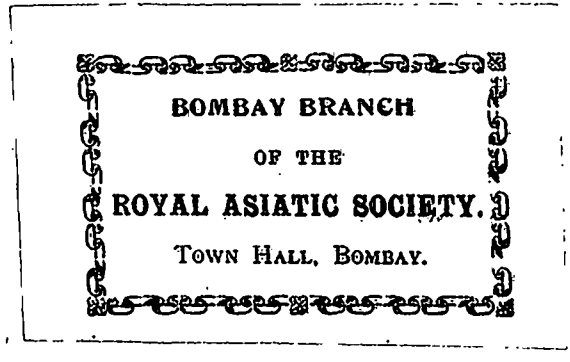
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CHARLES PHILIPPE DE FRANCE,

MONSIEUR FRERE DU ROI,

Né à Versailles le 9 Octob[illegible] 1757

MEMOIRS

OF

MARIA ANTOINETTA,

ARCHDUCHESS OF AUSTRIA,

QUEEN OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE;

INCLUDING

SEVERAL IMPORTANT PERIODS OF THE

French Revolution;

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE 16th OF OCTOBER, 1793,

THE DAY OF HER MAJESTY'S MARTYRDOM:

with a

NARRATIVE OF THE TRIAL AND MARTYRDOM OF MADAME ELIZABETH;
THE POISONING OF LOUIS XVII IN THE TEMPLE;
THE LIBERATION OF MADAME ROYALE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVI;
AND VARIOUS SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

36091
ac

BY JOSEPH WEBER,

Foster-brother of the unfortunate Queen, formerly employed in the Department of the Finances of France, and now a Pensioner of His Royal Highness the Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen.

Quæque ipse miserrima vidi. VIRG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

VOL. I.

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THE encouragement which I have received from the beginning of the task I have undertaken, and the generous support of so many persons of respectability, have inspired me with a gratitude, which has stimulated my exertions, and prompted me to spare no means to render my publication worthy of its object and deserving of a general approbation. This Work has already obtained such flattering, and, I may presume to say, unanimous suffrages, that, in acknowledgement, I have thought it incumbent on me to endeavour to render it as complete as possible, by adding to it, besides fourteen sheets of Historical and Biographical Annotations, five new Portraits of the Royal Family of France and that of the Illustrious Empress Maria Theresa. Thus I shall have had the good fortune to record in these Memoirs the features of the Grand-Mother, Daughter and Grand-Daughter of Cesarean blood, and to exhibit, as it were, in the same Picture, Three Generations of Illustrious Princesses, whose reunion recalls the remembrance of the most exalted magnanimity, the most heroic fortitude, and the most prepossessing kindness.

Hitherto it has not been in my power to give a correct list of persons who have been pleased to subscribe to my Work. My task being now accomplished, I have thought it my duty towards my Illustrious Protectors, as well as the loyal persons who readily inscribed their names on the monument erected by me to the memory of a most august and most unfortunate Sovereign, to have a new list printed, to be added to the third and last volume.

It may easily be judged, from the numberless sacrifices I have made, to render these Memoirs worthy of the grand object I aimed at, that, in this undertaking, I have been influenced by no mercenary views, since I have enlarged it, with additional expence, without increasing the price of the Subscription. If, however, I have succeeded in pourtraying virtues admired, and misfortunes lamented, by the world at large, if I have shewn that I did not seek the idle favors of fortune, but the esteem of the public, I shall enjoy the only satisfaction suitable to my heart.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE no pretenſion either to literary or political fame, and when my feelings led me to write what I think it now my duty to publiſh, it was far from my intention to compoſe a book for the public eye.

It was my unhappy fate to ſee the moſt powerful Queen rendered the moſt miſerable of human beings. Having been ſuckled by my mother, ſhe ever treated her with a kindneſs, which, I am bold to ſay, always beſpoke a degree of filial tenderneſs. When ſhe aſcended the throne of France, it was her will that I ſhould become a Frenchman; ſhe obtained from the King a place of truſt for me, and granted me, what was to me of more value than all the places in the world, the privilege of paying her an aſſiduous attendance. To the very laſt the Archduchess of Auſtria, the Queen of France, deigned to call her moſt devoted ſervant by the name of *Brother*. I ſucceſſively beheld

her felicity and her afflictions, her beneficence and her courage, her graces and her virtues, the just homage which was paid to her, and the sacrilegious outrages with which she was assailed. I had several opportunities of observing her at those moments when, wiping away the secret tears she was shedding for the misfortunes of her family, she suddenly appeared before the public, displaying that strength of mind, which virtue always admires, and by which guilt is frequently awed. I saw and heard her for the last time on the 10th of August, 1792. On that day she observed, directed, and rewarded my zeal. On that day I hoped to die at her feet. On that day she addressed some words to me, for the last time, through MADAME ELIZABETH, during the fatal removal from the Palace of the Thuilleries to the Hall of the Assembly, having then, it may be well said, entered the avenues of death. My eyes were incessantly fixed upon her, till the door of the Hall of that Regicide Assembly shut in all the august family: and had my brave comrades, the grenadiers of the battalion of the *Filles St. Thomas*, been seconded, that

door would have been broken in before the cannon of the rebels were brought up, and rendered resistance unavailing.

When the Queen was committed to the Tower of the *Temple*, it was but right that her faithful servant should be thrown into the dungeons of *La Force*. Why, great God! were not safety and destruction, life and death, differently dispensed! Oh! that I had been sacrificed in those massacres of September, to which I seemed destined, and that, for the good of the world, life and liberty had been the lot of the King and Queen of France, of their children, of all the family of HENRY IV!

By one of those unaccountable caprices which, in the course of the French Revolution, have so often puzzled the reason of man, I was, amidst the massacres of September 2d, indebted for the preservation of my sad and comparatively useless existence, to my devotion to my protectress, in a town where she herself was doomed to meet only monsters ready to assassinate her; where a

servant or a friend dared not show himself, and could not defend her.

I determined to adhere no longer to a country such as France was become; and nothing on earth could have prevailed upon me to perform the horrible condition exacted from me for the sparing of my life, which was, to enrol myself in the army of the factious. Rather than have become a soldier of the Regicide Commune, rather than have drawn my sword against my lawful Sovereigns, I would have plunged that sword into my own heart.

I thought no longer, then, but of escaping to my native country, thenceforth my only one; to those abodes of loyalty and valour, sensibility and honour, the inhabitants of which, proud that their country had given birth to MARIA ANTOINETTA, were bitterly lamenting that such a treasure had been sent to a land so unworthy of possessing her.

Obliged to escape in a boat from Havre, I first took refuge in the common asylum of

the unfortunate, Great Britain; where I only remained the time necessary to pay my respects to the minister of my Sovereign, and to the principal defenders and true friends of the King and Queen of France. One of the most devotedly attached and illustrious of these, one who perhaps enjoyed the greatest share of confidence in the thoughts and griefs of our courageous and unfortunate Princess, the Duke de Choiseul, thought proper to take me himself to Brussels, and present me to the Archduchess MARIA CHRISTINA. I was, alas! but too well provided with the means of interesting her Royal Highness. I answered all her questions fully. Her tears flowed copiously at the accounts I gave, which at the same time excited in her the greatest ardour for the deliverance of her Royal Sister from captivity.

Far was I from thinking of myself in my narratives to her Royal Highness; but scarcely had I quitted her presence, when, by the orders of herself and her illustrious consort, the Duke ALBERT of Saxe-Teschen, I re-

ceived a considerable present for the immediate time, and was informed that I should in future have a pension, which was to be continued *till the period when I should return to France:* an expression I have since often repeated to myself, and which, although the remembrance of it is now very painful, was, at the time it was used, replete with consolation and hope.

Shortly after, I thought I had good grounds to indulge myself in such feelings. The Count de Mercy, the Count de Metternich, and the Marquis de Circello, had received and questioned me with a solicitude equal to that of her Royal Highness. On the 14th December, 1792, I had the honor of being chosen by his Excellency, the Count de Metternich, to carry to the Emperor my master the first news, or at least the first hope, of the accession of England to the league formed against the tyrants of France, the jailors of its King.

How often on the road did I with tears in my eyes, not tears of bitterness however,

look on the dispatches of which I was the bearer! how often say to myself, *I have in my hands the preservation of the King and Queen of France!* Alas! scarcely did a month elapse before an account arrived at Vienna of the execrable parricide committed on the sacred person of Louis XVI. in the capital of his kingdom. I felt all the anguish that was at that moment inflicted on the heart of the unhappy Queen, for whose preservation, however, I hoped there would yet be sufficient time, although it had failed for the King's.

Hope became in my mind certainty, when I saw England compelled, by the aggression of the regicides, to declare herself, sooner perhaps than she was inclined to do; and so essential was it to me to believe that the valued object would be saved, that I cherished the fond illusion of the rebels having glutted their rage, by their first parricide, and that at least women and children, for I wished not the Queen the misery of surviving her children, would be spared by the sword of the executioner. All Germany

hoped it to the very last moment. At first, no doubt was entertained but that a conquering arm was about to break the fetters of that disconsolate family, raise the throne of him whose death they were deploring, and place the young King upon it under the guardianship of his mother. It was afterwards thought, that the points, the pursuit of which by force of arms had been abandoned, would be obtained by the medium of negotiation. It was fondly imagined that means had been found to disunite the villains who ruled at Paris, to purchase the most powerful of them, and to awe the rest; and hope already saw the daughter of MARIA THERESA conveyed to the bosom of her family, receiving those consolations which they and her whole country were emulous to offer to her. Most ardent and sincere was the desire of this hope being realized, nor can there be a doubt that those means were used which appeared the most likely to effect it: yet had the hero, who has since become the object of universal love and admiration, been then known as he now is; had the life of his aunt been committed to his heart, to his head,

to his arm, the Archduke CHARLES might at that period have preserved the Queen, and perhaps France, as he has since twice preserved Germany and Europe. Will it be said that he was then very young? true, but the Archduke CHARLES was born what others are formed. In 1793, he was twenty-two years old, precisely the age at which the great Condé gained the battle of Rocroi.

Surely, when the Prince of Saxe and General Clairfait had overthrown the French at Nerwinde; when driven from Mayence, from the country of Liege, and out of the Low Countries, the revolutionary soldiers could no longer defend even the barriers of the republic; when Dumourier and his army had shaken off the yoke of the regicide government, and were ready to turn their arms against it; when the bulk of the nation, groaning under their oppression, held out their arms to foreigners, who appeared as deliverers and not as enemies; when the Duke of York had made himself master of Valenciennes, when the Prince of Wurtemberg had entered Condé, and General Clairfait Quesnoi; when

the Commiſſioners of the Convention, flying from all parts of the frontiers, unexpectedly met at Peronne to the number of thirty-two; when Barrère exclaimed in the Tribune, *that there was an end to the Republic if troops were not sent to the North;* when the prodigies of the Catholic and Royal Armies began to be displayed in the West, and when in the South, Toulon and Lyons were seen erecting the standard of royalty; surely during the six months occupied by these events, it was natural to think that the revolutionary monsters, as was said in a letter by the Count de Mercy, would be anticipated, that time would not be allowed them to recover themselves, and that at least they would be reduced to purchase their lives by the ſafety and deliverance of the auguſt victims, who were ſtill alive in their hands.

Inſtead of that, the victors ſtopped, divided, annihilated themſelves. The auguſt nephew of MARIA ANTOINETTA could not prevail upon the Allies to proceed together towards the object to which his heart was ſolicitous to lead them. The ſeparation of

the royal armies decidedly transferred victory to the republicans. There no longer remained any obstacle to a measure which destroyed every hope; to that *levée en masse*, that general levy of the people, which, as was observed in a memoir addressed to the Count de Mercy, *a child might have foreseen, and a man might have prevented.* The armies of La Vendée were enclosed in a circle, where they could not but consume themselves. Lyons created as much affliction as it had inspired hope and admiration. The Dowager of Louis XVI. was abandoned to a band of assassins, viler still than those of her unfortunate consort, and equally ferocious. The 16th of October, 1793, surpassed in horror the 21st of January; Germany was plunged into mourning; and the whole world, struck with astonishment, were moved with pity, and enflamed with indignation.

In speaking of a general misfortune, I should not dare to mention my private affliction, had I not to tell that it was the cause of my writing what I did not foresee would one day be committed to the press.

To lament as an individual the individual loss I had sustained, was but natural. A prey to despair, my sufferings for a long time admitted no other relief than constantly pondering upon them; or rather they became the habitual and involuntary meditations of my mind. The recollections and misfortunes, the life and death of my august benefactress, were ever present to my imagination, and appeared to me in every object. I saw her every where, and ever in those contrasted situations, the idea of which cannot be suppressed, and is not to be borne; I saw her in the two extremes of the lot of mankind, now sipping the exquisite delights of prosperity, now draining the cup of adversity of its very dregs! such greatness! such beauty! a soul so generous! a heart so benevolent! Then her sufferings! the brutality exercised against her, the accumulation of outrages, the excess of degradation, horrors on which respect forbids to dwell, even long enough to curse them! Lastly, the sacrifice, in which the blow of death was the slightest crime of the murderers, the slightest pang of the victim!

Amid these paintings of a tortured imagination it was that I took up the pen, without any regular design, and meaning only to state the grounds of the devotion paid by myself and my family, to the memory of her whom it was our custom to call by the name of THE MARTYR. I wrote without connexion, without order, just as memory, conversation, or the homage of the day recalled to my mind instances of beneficence or acts of courage, a festival or a tragedy, a moment of hope or some new disaster. At one time I committed to paper what I had seen and heard myself, at another what had been told me by witnesses, in whom I had as much confidence as in myself, and sometimes I penned the result of my reading when, in the course of it, I had found a fact to collect, a mistake to rectify, or a calumny to confound; for where shall we find the character, however angelic, which calumny dares not attack, even in ordinary times? and at periods when every criminal passion breaks loose, can that restrain itself more than any other?

These recitals, however, these fragments, for I dare not say these Memoirs, did not con-

tinue so strictly confined to my own family, as I imagined they would. At first, some friends, then some fellow-sufferers, and afterwards persons eminently distinguished for all that in society bestows a right to respect and homage, for rank, science, talents, and especially for virtue, desired to see my manuscripts. I have received them back bathed with the tears of my countrymen. — Worthy Germans! first nation among those who have the least departed from nature! you, have not yet thought it right to abjure the native and characteristic affections of mankind! you think a people may be powerful without ceasing to be good; you do more, you prove it. You consider insensibility the reverse rather than the test of genius; among you love is the attendant of admiration. You do not hold it necessary to mock those who fly to the support of truth rejected, and of justice deserted. You have neither learned to laugh at the compassion of feeling hearts, nor to despise the esteem of worthy men. To you the narratives of misfortune, the overflowings of grief, the cries of innocence, and the precepts of virtue, are not tiresome; for these in your country find no corrupt and

hardened hearts to glance upon and bound off, but pure and feeling minds into which they penetrate.

I not only found myself solicited, and urged on every side to publish what I had written, but I was favoured by persons of the purest mind and highest rank, with the gift of documents the most precious in my work. Thus I became possessed of the most circumstantial account yet communicated of the flight of Louis XVI. and Maria Antoinetta in 1791, of their deplorable arrest at Varennes, in a word, of the whole of that event, from the day the project was conceived, to the termination of the captivity which was the melancholy result of it; an account which, I might say, was dictated by the Queen. It has been my good fortune also to obtain another paper, relative to this event, which decided the fate of the French empire, a paper that has been in my possession for seven years, and on which I have never been able to cast my eyes, without experiencing a sudden emotion of sorrow, respect, and pity, similar to what I felt at the mo-

ment I first received it. It consists but of a few pages, but those pages were written, were given to me, by one who of all human beings inspires at present the greatest interest, and commands the highest veneration; by her, who to the influence of her own graces, virtues, and misfortunes, adds the constant recollection of four Martyrs, of whom she was the daughter, the sister, and the niece; by her who, wherever she goes, carries with her the memory of them, their features, the idea of all that befel them, all their greatness and all their misfortunes, all their goodness and all their sufferings; the most sacred rights, the noblest devotion, charms the most innocent; all blasphemed, all emulously sacrificed by the most unjust rebellion, the basest tyranny, and the most hideous ferocity. When the DUTCHESS OF ANGOULEME, the daughter of LOUIS XVI. and MARIA ANTOINETTA, after reading the feeble homage I had paid to her august parents, added, in returning my manuscripts, those pages which she had traced with a pure hand, and from a heart teeming with filial tenderness, could I doubt that it was incumbent upon me to

render public that homage which she had consecrated in deigning to join in it herself? When the Imperial family, the family of my adored benefactress, kept my Memoirs for several weeks; and, when the pious liberality of my Sovereign, and of the great, encouraged the publication of what they had read; when the Archduchess Christina, affected by this feeble tribute of fidelity, deigned to mention me in her will, and when her august consort had bestowed upon me a distinguished place among the numerous objects of his beneficence, was it possible for me to consign to oblivion, what so many virtues, and so many favours seemed to command me to make known?

But I thought it necessary to wait for a proper juncture, reflecting that the time of action and of hope ought not to be consumed in regret and retrospection. In taking advantage too of the delay, to render these fragments as little imperfect as possible, by arranging them in that chronological order, which is no less indispensable in detached narratives, than in a connected his-

tory; I flattered myself that time would enable me to close so many melancholy epochs with one of a consoling nature.

Providence has decided otherwise: the period it has appointed for restoring to the blood of Louis XVI. an inheritance of nine centuries, seems yet at a distance, at least according to the calculations of human wisdom. The most generous efforts have had no other effect than to preserve the honor, and to immortalize the virtue of those who made them. The most brilliant actions have been rendered unavailing by the vicissitudes of war. It has been observed more than once, that courage has been deficient in prudence, genius in rectitude, and promises have not been attended with punctuality, but above all, union has been wanting in alliances. On a fatal day victory was again torn from the conquerors. It became a duty for every shepherd to take care of the flock for which he was accountable to Providence. Continental war is at an end, and History about to enter upon her task of recording this astonishing period in the annals of mankind.

Among the materials she is about to collect I humbly deposit mine. I offer her a modest, but pure, and honest testimony, and however ardent my feelings may be, truth can have nothing to fear from the enthusiasm which virtue inspires.



M.T. Pabst pinx.

F. Bartolozzi

. MARIE-ANTOINETTE, REINE DE FRANCE

ET DE NAVARRE. NÉE. 2 NOVBE 1755.

MEMOIRS

RELATIVE TO

MARIA-ANTOINETTA,

Archduchess of Austria,

QUEEN OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of the Queen. Her education, departure from Vienna, marriage, prosperity, character, and generally all that relates to her previous to the commencement of the French Revolution.

MARIA-ANTOINETTA-JOSEPH-JANE OF LORRAINE, ARCHDUCHESS OF AUSTRIA, daughter of FRANCIS I. Emperor of Germany, and of the immortal MARIA-THERESA, Empress of Germany, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, was born on the 2nd of November, 1755.

A short time previous to her birth, the Empress gave orders to her governess to look for a nurse in some respectable family, of pure morals and unspotted character; a description com-

pletely applicable to my virtuous parents, to whom I am proud to pay this public tribute of respect. My father, Mr. George Weber, was a Counsellor in the Magistracy of Vienna, and at the head of the Victualling-Office: my mother, Maria-Constantia Hoffman, was distinguished for the beauty of her person, and still more for that of her mind. Their marriage had constantly presented a union of the domestic virtues. My mother was fixed upon to be the nurse of the Archduchess, and I was three months old when she had the honour of receiving the charge.

MARIA-THERESA was a good mother as well as a great Queen. Her tenderness seemed as soft as her courage appeared majestic and sublime. No sooner had she entrusted her child to my mother than she adopted us all. She rewarded the long services of my father with a considerable pension, and a grant of apartments in the Hotel de la Chancellerie. A pension was settled on my mother, and one also on each of her children. As for me, whose lot it was to be nourished with the same milk that MARIA-ANTOINETTA was, Her Imperial Majesty desired my mother, while I was a child, to take me with her whenever she went to pay her respects to the young Princess whom she had suckled.

The daughter of the Cesars then made me join in the sports of her infancy, in which the Empress herself took a part; and, as at that age nothing had yet made me sensible of the immense distance between myself and her with whom I played, the august and good MARIA-THERESA, fearing to give me pain if she bestowed her caresses partially, often took me on one of her knees when she held her daughter on the other, and honoured me with embraces similar to those she lavished upon her. It was from my mother, and from her Excellency the Countess de Brandeis*, that I afterwards learned these scenes of goodness; nor did I learn them, or have I ever recollected them, without the warmest sentiments of respect and love. They were accompanied with a thousand little presents, given to me either by the Empress or by the young Archduchess, and sometimes by the Archdukes. We still preserve in our family one of those gifts; a little room, in which the Lord's Supper is represented with moveable figures; a precious relic, which we now cherish more than ever from the too painful additions of memory.

How often has MARIA-THERESA deigned to say to my mother; "Good Weber, I desire you

* Governess to Her Royal Highness the Archduchess.

" will take particular care of your son. Attend
" to his education. Let him conduct himself
" well, and I assure him, as well as you, of my
" protection as long as I live."

The infancy of MARIA-ANTOINETTA was that of the graces and of goodness, to which was early added that ſpecies of nobleness which was peculiar to her through her whole life; and which, tempered by sensibility, inspired respect, in showing it surrounded by charms. With all the endowments of nature, the superintendence of a mother like MARIA-THERESA, and the attention of a governess like Madame de Brandeis, every thing good and great was to be expected from the young Archduchess.

She had so completely gained the affection of all who were about her during her education, that, at the time of her marriage, the joy of knowing she was wedded to the Dauphin of France, was entirely clouded at Vienna by the grief which arose from the thought of losing her. When one reflects on the parting of MARIA-ANTOINETTA with her family, her servants, her country, in 1770, it is not easy to withstand the superstitious notions of forebodings. She permitted, I might say she desired, that my mother

and I should be admitted to take leave of her. I threw myself at her feet; and, with marks of the most profound sorrow, addressed her in these words: "May Heaven render Your Royal High-"ness the happiest of women; and I entreat "your pardon, for not being able to conceal the "sorrow with which your departure overwhelms "me." She raised me with inexpressible goodness, and said to me, "Why afflict yourself to "this degree? I leave you my mother, who will "take care of you and your's. We are not part-"ing for life—perhaps I shall see you all again "—be sure to persuade your mother that it will "be so: do you hear?" She put out her hand to me, and I bathed it with tears. My mother here came in, and I again saw MARIA-ANTOINETTA throw her arms round the neck of her nurse, and press her cheeks with her hands, at the same time saying, "My dear nurse, I shall "love you as long as ever I live. Do not forget "me." "Forget Your Royal Highness!" cried my mother, falling at the feet of the Archduchess, "it will be the employment of my whole life to "adore you." She wished to add some more words, but her sobs only could be heard, and her senses were bewildered. The Countess of Brandeis, who loved my mother, and who saw the emotion of the young Princess, said, it was better

for both that this scene should not be prolonged. At the same time, she led the Archduchess away, observing to us how much she was affected; and I took care of my mother, whose agitation was perhaps not greater than my own.

On the next day but one, a truly afflicting scene took place. The Archduchess left Vienna. The people all flew to the way she was to take; and at first their grief was dumb. She appeared; and was seen, her cheeks bathed in tears, lying back in her coach, covering her eyes sometimes with her handkerchief and sometimes with her hands; now and then putting her head out of the carriage, to take another look at the palace of her ancestors, which she was never more to enter; and making signs of regret and acknowledgment to the truly worthy people, who were pressing in crowds to bid her adieu. They now no longer answered with silent tears; the most piercing cries arose from every quarter. Men and women expressed their grief alike. The avenues as well as the streets of Vienna resounded with their cries; nor did they return home till the last horseman in her suite was out of sight, and then but to bewail with their families the common loss. The melancholy impression lasted for a long time; and long did the ca-

pital of Austria wear the appearance of a general mourning, instead of the hilarity of a marriage. Alas! already was the day marked in futurity when that mourning was to be a dreadful one!

Every tribute of respect, all the charms of hope, all the intoxication of public love, attended the entrance of the daughter of MARIA-THERESA, the young and beautiful Dauphiness of France, on the French territory. On her way, she every where captivated all hearts. Nature, as was said by Madame Polignac, had formed MARIA-ANTOINETTA for a throne. A majestic stature, a noble beauty, and a manner of holding her head difficult to describe, inspired respect. Her features, without being regular, possessed, what was far superior, infinite grace. The clearness of her complexion set them off, and gave a dazzling lustre to her countenance. The most engaging manners still heightened all these charms; and, in the bloom of youth, the elegance and vivacity of her motions, with the frank and lively expression of a good heart and native wit, were particularly calculated to delight the French of those days. She charmed her husband, she charmed the King and all his family, the court and the town, the high and the low, each sex, all ranks, and all ages.

A very melancholy occurrence, and which from that very time was considered as a fatal presage, too soon gave her an opportunity of manifesting the goodness of her heart. I allude to the dreadful accident that happened in the *Rue Royale* at Paris, on the day of the feast given by the Parisians, in the square called the *Place de Louis XV.* in honour of her marriage with the Dauphin. A wretched claim was the cause of that sad event. The *Prevot des Marchands*, head of the corporation of the town, claimed, on this occasion, the right of exercising the police, which would have been much better left to the intelligence and activity of M. de Sartine, who had been long accustomed to it. Inexperienced town guards displayed their fine attire at the posts where less magnificent soldiers would have been of more use. No regulation was settled for entering or quitting the square, for the line of carriages, or for the passing of the crowd. When the fireworks were over, a violent conflict took place, between the body of people coming from the Bouvelard to the *Place de Louis XV.* and the crowd going from the square to the Bouvelard. On each side the multitude was continually encreased, by all who were coming up by the Thuilleries or the *Rue St. Honoré.* The situation soon became very dangerous, particularly

to those in the front of the two bodies, which were pressed the one against the other with all the force of those behind them acting in an opposite direction. At this moment, the scaffold, which had been erected around the King's statue for the fireworks, took fire. The firemen, with their heavy engines and large horses, made way through the immense throng, already so closely pressed; and, a passage once opened, some privileged carriages attempted to take advantage of it: the confusion was beyond every thing: the garden of the Thuilleries might have supplied a passage, had not the bridge been removed; for which reason, all who were at the edge of the moat pushed with the greater impetuosity towards the *Rue Royale.* Shrieks of terror were now heard on all sides; and, dreadful to relate, the groans of the dying were soon mingled with them. Several unfortunate people fell as they were carried back to the extremities of the street: these drew others with them in their fall, and whoever fell was trampled under foot. The feast was turned into mourning. M. de Sartine, on being informed of the situation of the people, immediately sent out his usual officers of police, and put a stop to the disasters which threatened to become innumerable; too many were irreparable. In disengaging

these heaps of wretched people who had been thrown upon one another, fifty-three were found dead, and six times as many either expiring or dreadfully hurt. The latter were carried into all the neighbouring houses, where they received assistance; and nearly two-thirds of them were saved. The dead were laid in a line, one after another, at the entrance of the Bouvelard; so that all the carriages going to the illuminations on the ramparts were obliged to drive past the fifty-three dead bodies. The next day they were exposed in the church-yard of *la Madeleine*, where their wretched families came to look for them, and where they were buried; in that very ground which afterwards ..... but let us not anticipate these dreadful events.

One may judge what a consternation must have been spread by such a calamity. The Dauphin was extremely affected; the Dauphiness was inconsolable, and frequently found shedding tears. She repeatedly said,—" And " perhaps we have not been told all!" Nor was she wrong in this conjecture. The obscure condition of the sufferers allowed the number to be much diminished in the information given to the court. MARIA-ANTOINETTA and her consort gave all they had, to assist the survivors who

were hurt, and the families of the dead. Every one knew of this benevolence, every one felt comforted in repeating the letter written by the Dauphin to the Lieutenant of the Police: "I have "heard of the disasters which happened during "the rejoicings on my account, and I feel for "them extremely. I have this moment received "what the King gives me monthly for my "pocket-money; it is all I can command, and I "send it to you. Assist the most unfortu-"nate *."

* It is impossible to conceive whence M. de Montjoye could have taken what he says in the Life of Louis XVI. that *dead bodies were counted in the Champs Elysées, on the quay of the Thuilleries, and even on the Port Royal. It is a known fact*, adds he, *that, during the time of this calamity, men with drawn swords in their hands were seen throwing themselves into the throng, and cutting at all who opposed their passage.* One seems attending to the poetic recital of Theramenes:

> On dit qu'on a vu même, en ce desordre affreux,
> Un Dieu qui d'aiguillons pressoit leurs flanes poudreux.
>
> 'Tis said amid the fray a God appear'd,
> Goading with pointed steel their dusty sides.

And Mr. Montjoye pretends, according to those assertions, *to conjecture, with considerable probability, that those* who brought about the Revolution of 1789 *desired it at that very time*, in 1770, *and sought to make a first essay of their strength, by taking advantage of a great crowd, to throw the mass of people into a fit of despair.* This is really writing with too little discernment.

The sensation of pain was allayed; and the impression made by the sensibility of the young and august couple was almost the only one attending this sad event that remained, when they made their public entry into the capital.

Every minute of this day was a minute of triumph to MARIA-ANTOINETTA. The beauty of her countenance, the grace of her form and manner, enraptured all who beheld her. The splendid carriage in which she rode penetrated with difficulty the multitude of people, who could never be sufficiently satisfied with seeing, admiring, and blessing her. When, having left the Cathedral, where she had first been to render thanks to God, she arrived at the *Hotel de Ville*; Mareschal de Brissac, Governor of Paris,

A great number of Frenchmen, who have been spoken to on this *known fact* advanced by M. de Montjoye, have all considered such an assertion as a piece of folly. All agree on that union of fortuitous and unfortunate circumstances which I have described, and which were the only cause of that dreadful disaster. Foreigners should be put on their guard against all these erroneous accounts: and truth obliges me to observe, that there are many of this kind in the writings of M. de Montjoye. They are so pure in their design, and contain such affecting pages, that one feels extremely sorry to find that he has so often written from inaccurate information, and, it must be said, from unjust prejudice.

went at the head of the municipal body to meet her; and, with that original gallantry for which he was distinguished, addressed her, without an harangue, in these words: " *Madam, you have before your eyes two hundred thousand lovers of your person.*" He spoke the truth. The sentence flew from mouth to mouth through the immense square before the *Hotel de Ville*, and excited the most rapturous applause. At the Thuilleries, the Dauphin and Dauphiness walked in the garden, to gratify the eager wishes of the people, and again met the same converse, and the same excess of delight. Joy, says a journal of the times, beamed from the countenance of the Princess, as well as from that of the Dauphin, who frequently enquired if any accident had happened, and whether the guards employed in restraining the multitude did harm to any one. In expressing their acknowledgments, both of them exclaimed, *What good people! What good people!* On that day the exclamation was just. When they returned to the palace, as the curiosity of the public was not yet satisfied, notwithstanding the different rides and walks they had taken, seeing the stream of spectators overflow the terrace, they showed themselves at a gallery which overlooked it. There now took place, between this august pair and the people, a kind

of affectionate diversified dialogue, carried on by smiles, benevolent looks, and tutelary affection, on the one part; and on the other, by tumultuous acclamations, shouts of joy, and mingled vows of popular love. Every time that the fascinating objects appeared inclined to withdraw, a general groan, which they had not power to resist, detained them; and this affecting scene could only be terminated by the coming on of night. In the mean time, the King at Versailles was looking for the return of his grandchildren with an impatience approaching to anxiety. As they threw themselves into his arms on their arrival, "My children," said he to them, "I "began to be uneasy. You must have had a "very fatiguing day!" "It has been the "sweetest of our lives," said the Dauphiness. "Yes," cried the Dauphin, almost at the same instant, "it has indeed been the sweetest of "our lives."

Eager to revisit a place where they had experienced such delightful affection, and enjoyed so pure a triumph, they went there together, to see the play of *The Siege of Calais*, a tragedy that always excited the greatest enthusiasm, from its being a monument of the national honour, and of the love which the French bore their King.

No sooner did the actor pronounce these lines,

Le François, dans son Prince aime à trouver un frère,
Qui, né fils de l'état, en devienne le père;

He loves to find a brother in his Prince,
Who, born his country's son, becomes its sire;

than the house resounded with shouts and continued plaudits, and all eyes were turned towards the Dauphin, who, the next moment, seizing the application of another sentiment of the play to express his acknowledgment, gracefully bent towards the audience, and clapped the following line:

Rendre heureux qui nous aime, est un si doux devoir!

To render happy those who truly love us,
How sweet a duty!

The Dauphiness, with an expression replete with grace, joining in turn in the respective sentiments which the people had applied to the Prince, and the Prince to the people, seemed every instant to be more and more deserving of the conquest she had made of both; nor was it long before the nation was convinced, that the loveliness of her mind equalled that of her person.

The occurrence which took place at the village of Achere, though then celebrated by poets and painters, by the applause of every feeling mind, and by the blessings of the unfortunate person who was relieved, is now forgotten. I shall therefore relate it among others, which, to detail at length, would exceed the bounds of this work.

It happened when Louis XV. was hunting in the forest of Fontainbleau, that a furious stag, having been several times wounded, leaped over the low wall of a little garden at Achere, and springing on a peasant, who was digging on the ground, thrust his horns into his bowels. Some of the neighbours, who saw the sad accident, finding that the poor gardener was expiring, ran to tell his wife, who was working in the fields, at the distance of a mile and a half from the place. The unhappy woman rent the air with her cries, and gave every mark of the most violent despair. The Dauphiness, who was passing in a chariot at the time, not far from the spot, in her way to the rendezvous of the chace, hearing the cries of the disconsolate woman, stopped her carriage, and darting from it, flew across the vineyard, to the assistance of the sufferer, whom she found in fits. She made her smell

some hartshorn, and in the meanwhile enquired into the nature of the accident that had just happened; the poor woman, on recovering, found herself in the arms of the Dauphiness, who was weeping. This young Princess endeavoured, by every tender consideration which her heart could suggest, to console this victim of calamity, and gave her all the money her purse contained. When the Dauphin, the Count and Countess of Provence came up, they mingled their sympathy with her's, and followed the example of her bounty. She then ordered her carriage to the spot, and obliged the miserable woman to get in, with her child, and two other villagers; at the same time giving strict charge to one of her servants to carry the wife with all speed to her husband, and the poor child to its father, and then to return as quick as possible to give her an account of the state in which the wounded man was. Whilst the Dauphiness was waiting in all the agony of suspence for the footman's return, the King joined her, and, hearing what had happened, exclaimed—"What a shocking "thing it would be if this man should die; how "shall we ever console his wife and child?"—"How otherwise, my dear father," replied the Dauphiness, "than by striving to relieve their dis-"tress? for shall we not, by that means, in some

"degree lessen the bitterness of their lot!" The King immediately promised to give them a pension, and ordered his first surgeon to visit the wounded man every day, who, by such care, was at length restored to his family, to bless his illustrious benefactress.

A calamity of a different kind, about this time, involved a deserving family in affliction. Many of the public offices of the revenue having been suppressed, a person who had a place in one of them, and who had all along distinguished himself by his address and attention in business, lost his sole dependence and support with his situation. He was married to a woman who, as well as himself, was a pattern of all the domestic virtues, by whom he had a family of sixteen children. M. Leon, so was this worthy but unfortunate person called, set out from the further part of Bretagne, where he was employed as comptroller of the mints, taking with him his wife and children in a tilted waggon, and arrived at Compiegne, where the Court then was; for he had now no other hope, no other resource, than that of presenting at the foot of the throne a picture of distress, replete with the most aggravated circumstances of wretchedness and melancholy interest. The Abbé Ferray, to whom

application was made, was of all men the most unpitying in his nature; and it was to no purpose that even the King himself, when informed by others of the disastrous condition in which M. Leon, who had served him so well, was plunged with his numerous family, recommended him to the notice of this unfeeling minister; nothing was done to compensate for the privation this faithful servant had suffered; the scanty remnant of property that he and his wretched family had to subsist on, was wearing away with a rapidity that filled their minds with the most dreadful apprehensions; want stared them in the face; till at length, reduced to the last extremity, they found means to have the Dauphiness made acquainted with their misfortunes. She, with the promptness that ever characterised her goodness, instantly declared she would take them under her protection, desiring to see them, that she might personally assure them of it; no sooner had the interview taken place, than with all her feelings tremblingly alive, she hastened to the King, who beheld in the Dauphiness, Beauty in tears, pleading the cause of Virtue in distress. Louis XV. highly pleased with the personal elegance and sympathy of his grand-daughter, answered her in a manner that at once evinced

his goodnature and politeness—" I know well," said he, " that there is not an honester man " living than he for whom you interest yourself; " I know too that he has a large and amiable " family, and I have already spoken to the " Comptroller-General to give him a situation." —" But this he has not done," replied the Dauphiness. " Well, well," rejoined the King, taking hold of both her hands, " perhaps the " Abbé Ferray will pay more attention to the " recommendation of a beautiful woman—send " for him, and make me happy by settling " this business yourself."—" And am I commis- " sioned to act as you would do, Sir?"—" Pre- " cisely."—" Then, rely upon it, I shall assume " all the tone of a king."—" And sure I am, " you will give to royalty a superior grace!" The Dauphiness flew home, with as much eagerness as she had set out, and sent for the Abbé; when, with that air of mingled condescension and dignity, so entirely her own, and clothing her features with a noble and easy smile, such as befitted the tone of authority she assumed, she thus addressed the minister: " Mr. Comp- " troller-General, I have been made acquainted " with the calamitous situation in which a " faithful servant of the King, and an excel- " lent parent, is involved by the recent abo-

" lition of some of the offices in the revenue " department. The name of this person is " Leon; he is in this town at this moment; you " have doubtless seen him, and you are well- " informed of the nature of his pretensions. " Now as there are several places actually va- " cant in this department, I take upon myself " to nominate him to one; and do you take " care that it be such an one as will amply make " up for that which he has lost. Remember, I " charge you with the execution of this busi- " ness, and you must give an account to me " how you have fulfilled the commission; and " not only to me, but to the King likewise," added she, with a smile more strongly marked; " for, believe me, he already expects it from " you." The Abbé Terray could not avoid smiling himself, and bowing, retired; he returned the next day with the *account required*, informing the Dauphiness that M. Leon had been appointed to a situation still more eligible than the one he filled before. " This appointment," said the Comptroller-General, " is as yet only known " to the King, to yourself, Madam, and to " me. The august patroness of M. Leon has " now to declare by whom she would have " the tiding of his good fortune made known " to him."—" By myself," answered the Dauphiness, who, returning the minister thanks with

all that lively emotion with which her beneficent design filled her heart, immediately sent for the father, mother, and sixteen children, announced to them the happiness that awaited them, and declared that in making them happy she had made herself so.

Scarcely had this good deed been accomplished, when the Dauphiness, having found that in consequence of some few retrenchments, and a fortunate run at play, she had a considerable sum of money in hand, gave orders to her steward to lay before her a list of all those females belonging to her household who were in straitened circumstances. When the list appeared, she saw many names were omitted; these she afterwards added with her own hand, and herself regulated the distribution of the whole sum of which she had the disposal.

The apprehension of implicating the memory of Louis XV. the regret also with which, in relating such circumstances as refer to this Monarch, I shall submit to the superior claims of truth; and the anxious desire which I feel to throw the veil of respect over the foibles of kings, now that their virtues are assailed by the most stubborn calumny, are all of them causes that forbid my dwelling upon

that meritorous line of conduct, peculiar and intricate as it was, which the Dauphiness, during the latter part of this reign, was too often called upon to pursue. The King's intimate regards were at that time engrossed by a woman, who did not sufficiently consider how indispensable it was for her always to keep in mind that he was a father, if she were desirous of securing to herself any pretensions to the smallest degree of indulgence on the part of his children; and that, remaining satisfied with her power over the person of the Monarch, it was her duty to avoid all occasion of offending the royal dignity, or of sullying the purity of domestic character. Notwithstanding this, however, she sought such opportunities of intruding herself and her connections into the presence of the Dauphin and Dauphiness, as the strict principles of virtue in the one, and the exalted character of soul in the other, could by no means endure. She carried this obtrusive behaviour so far, as even to seek to place one of her relations about their persons, by procuring him an important situation at Court. Louis XV. who well knew what was due to decorum, for a long time resisted her request; at length, however, he yielded, making use of nearly the same expres-

sion as Louis XIV. did with respect to his will: "It is my will, but you will find there are some "other persons whose it is not. It behoves you "to be upon your guard before the appointment "takes place." In fact, both the Dauphin and Dauphiness opposed it. The former publicly declared, that he would act as rigid justice demanded of him, the very first time this person entered his presence to perform the duties of his office. The favourite complained to the King of *the Dauphin's threat*; she appeared before him bathed in tears; but all the answer she received was, "Be assured he will be as "good as his word." She had therefore nothing left for her to do, after this assurance, than to wipe away her tears, and give up all thoughts of her relation's preferment. There is every reason to think, that the monarch applauded in his heart the nice sense of honour which his grandson displayed in this instance; and that he was no less pleased with the deportment of her whom he had chosen for his consort; who, by evincing so much elevated firmness and prudent reserve, showed how well she knew what belonged to the dignity of her sex, to her elevated rank, her high birth, and the great character to whom she was united.

Louis XV. was soon after attacked by that illness which at length carried him off. At this fearful crisis one and the same sentiment shook the breasts of the Dauphin and Dauphiness: grief took possession of their souls when they saw they must be deprived of a parent, who, amid his greatest foibles, never lost sight of the comfort and welfare of his family; their minds too looked forward with virtuous apprehension to that weight of care which their early years would soon be summoned to support. Those who were eye-witnesses of all that passed, have frequently described to me the scene which Versailles presented on the day in which the King, drawing near the point of death, fulfilled the last duties of a Christian. It was evening; the Royal Family and the whole Court were prostrated before their God in the palace-chapel, the sublime grandeur of which filled the minds of all with sacred awe. The holy sacrament was exposed, and the three-days' prayers were continued; every one imploring Heaven to restore their expiring Monarch. On a sudden, black heavy clouds obscured the sky, and night seemed all at once to have wrapped the whole edifice in thickest darkness; immediately a clap of thunder was heard, and the next instant the storm began; the winds whistled around the structure—tor-

rents of rain drove against the windows — flashes of lightning incessantly darting through, giving a dim paleness to the lights on the altar, while they cast a terrific glare over the mournful shade in which all around were involved— at one moment the thunder rolled with a sullen suppressed sound, at another it burst in loud explosions, as if it would rend the veil of the temple—at intervals the sacred chant was heard through the breaks of the tempest—and the voices and features of all present betrayed the terror with which their minds were impressed—the heavens answering in thunders to the invocations by which the mercy of God was called upon. The dreadful conflict of the elements, with which it was impossible to forbear associating the idea of the dissolution of the most powerful among men—the sight of the young heir apparent, and the beauteous partner of his life, both plunged in an agony of grief, both dissolved in tears at the foot of the altar, which they besought in vain—now meditating with affright upon the grave that opened to receive their parent, now looking forward with dread to that throne which they shuddered at the thoughts of ascending; and, finally, when the service was closed, and the assembly was departing from chapel, all absorbed in deep reflection, the profoundest

silence was preserved; not a voice was to be heard; no other sound reached the ear but the quick footsteps of those who were hastening to their respective families, there to unburthen themselves of that afflictive load with which the heart of every one felt itself oppressed. Such was the interesting concourse of circumstances that made up this scene of general discomfiture; and of which so striking have been the descriptions given to me on the very spot, that I feel as if I had myself witnessed an occurrence which was at the time classed among the inauspicious forebodings that ushered in the new reign.

It was begun. While Lewis XVI. was engaged in summoning to the aid of his youth the experience of age and the information of men of business, by a letter written in the most affecting style: while he was manifesting his new power by conferring his first favour * as King upon his people, the Queen fully displayed the generosity of her nature, in an answer which she made to one of her Court, and which reminds us of a reply made by that Monarch, whom the French surnamed *The Father of his People*, and whose name was associated afterwards with those of

* The remission of the impost called the *joyeux avénement*.

Henry IV. and Louis XVI*. The Marquis of Pontécoulant, Major of the Life-guards, had been so unfortunate in the lifetime of Louis XV. as to incur the displeasure of the Dauphiness. The cause was not a very serious one; but the Princess, resenting it with the hasty vivacity of youth, declared *she would never forget it.* The Marquis, who had not himself forgotten this declaration, no sooner beheld MARIA-ANTOINETTA seated on the throne, than he conceived himself likely to meet with some disgrace, and resolved to prevent it; for which purpose, he directly gave in his resignation to the Prince of Beauveau, Captain of the Guards, at the same time frankly giving him his reasons for so painful a procedure on his part, adding, that he would greatly regret being under the necessity of quitting the King's service; but if His Majesty would be pleased to employ him in some other way, he should be very happy. The Captain of the Guards perceiving the distress of the Major's mind, and well acquainted with his merits, took upon himself to present his resignation to the King; but, previously waiting upon the Queen, he represented to her the affliction with which the Marquis of

* When Louis XII. ascended the Throne, he told a Courtier who had merited his resentment when he was Dauphin: "Now you are safe."

Pontécoulant was overwhelmed, recounted the usefulness and number of his former services, and then concluded by asking what orders she would be pleased to give, with respect to what was to be done with the resignation. The sight alone of the Prince of Beauveau was sufficient to excite generosity in the heart of another, and that of MARIA-ANTOINETTA already fostered the principle in its fullest influence. " The " Queen," said she, " remembers not the quar- " rels of the Dauphiness, and I now request that " the Marquis of Pontécoulant will no longer " recollect what I have blotted from my me- " mory."

I take the years as they occur, passing from one to the other; and, from among numerous instances of a similar nature, I shall select one as a striking manifestation of that beneficence which can never be forgotten.

In 1776, the Queen, in one of her walks, saw an old infirm woman, seated at the foot of a tree*, surrounded with a number of small children. The heart of MARIA-ANTOINETTA yearned at beholding this picture of the two ex-

* In the village of St. Michael, not far from Versailles.

treme periods of human existence. She went up to the poor old creature, and questioning her with much sweetness, learned from her that all the young folks belonged to one family, but that the intermediate generation was passed away—the poor children having lost both father and mother, and were now left destitute of all other resource but that which this worthy grandmother supplied, who was herself groaning under the accumulated burden of poverty, hard work, and old age. The Queen, on hearing this account, instantly ordered abundant relief to be given to the whole family for their temporary support; and fixing her eyes, that overflowed with compassion, on the youngest of these orphans, exclaimed, "This child I shall take care of, and "bring up myself!" From that day the fortunate infant was taken to the apartment of her royal benefactress, and became the object of her playful attentions and tenderest caresses; while all, who were the delighted witnesses of this circumstance, put up their prayers to Heaven that the Queen might become a mother.

During the ensuing winter, which was very severe, the King and Queen took their several routes among the cottages of the poor, visiting and ordering fuel and sustenance for their respec-

tive inhabitants. The following verses, written upon this occasion, were in every one's mouth:

O Princesse, dans qui la France
Sous les traits d'Hébé voit Pallas,
Heureuse par ta bienfaisance,
Les vrais plaisirs guident tes pas:
Ton bonheur est d'entendre dire:
" Elle fait chérir son empire;
" Du peuple elle comble les veux;
" Et sensible à notre misère
" Elle veut, imitant sa mère,
" Etre celle des malheureux."

In thee, O Princess, France beholds combined
The bloom of Hebe, and Minerva's mind;
Thy graceful steps the purest pleasure guides,
While o'er thy joys beneficence presides:
How swells thy heart at accents such as these!
" Her sole ambition is her people's ease;
" No other happiness than their's she knows,
" Their every wish is her's, and her's their woes;
" For this she imitates her mother's grace,
" To be a mother to Misfortune's race.

One instance of public esteem followed close upon another—all subjects were made to have allusion to the Queen's beneficence. Voltaire entreated a lady, belonging to the palace, to intercede for him with the Queen, that he might obtain her permission for Le Kain to play Orosmanes at Ferney. His patroness urged his pe-

tition with persuasive effect, the Queen granted it in the kindest manner, and the poet in raptures thanked them both. But when Le Kain entered his house at Ferney, Voltaire's first salute, or rather his first exclamation, was—

Acteur, sublime et soutien de la scène
Quoi ! vous quittez votre brillante cour,
Votre Paris embelli par la Reine !
De nos beaux arts la jeune Souveraine
Vous fait partir pour mon triste séjour !
On m'a conté que souvent elle-même
Se dérobant à sa grandeur suprême,
Sèche en secret les pleurs du malheureux.
Son moindre charme, est, dit-on, d'être belle.
Ah ! laissons là les héros fabuleux,
Il faut du vrai : ne parlons plus que d'elle.

Welcome, thou pride and guardian of the stage!
Say, can my solitary roof engage
Thy steps to wander from that splendid scene,
Where Science hails thy youthful Sov'reign, Queen?
From thine own Paris canst thou come away
That shines in all the radiance of her ray?
Such is her will—a will all hearts obey.

I've heard how oft where Want in secret wails,
Her form sublime in Pity's guise she veils,
To cheer with grace meek Charity has giv'n—
No mortal charm—a grace she gain'd from Heav'n!
'Tis not for fabled heroes then to share
Our hours of converse—Truth demands our care,
And bids us all her fav'rite's fame declare.

But her country did more than praise, it imitated the bright pattern of royal beneficence. Thus, while succour was afforded to the distressed, the virtuous were encouraged; rewards were every where decreed to those who excelled in prudent and moral conduct; to pious children, and tender mothers; for worthy actions, and useful efforts. In one place was held the *feast of the worthy*—in another, the *feast of morals*. In the Isle of France, Picardy, Franche-comté, and Normandy, several of these interesting and salutary institutions were established. But that which took place in the latter province, at *Canon-les bonnes gens*, in the month of October 1776, was fraught with peculiarly affecting circumstances. On the right and left of a pedestrian statue of Henry IV. two pictures were respectively arranged, the one representing the King visiting in disguise the habitations of the poor, in the neighbourhood of Versailles, during the preceding winter, with this inscription:

Quel nouvel hôte est entré sous nos toits * ?

What stranger guest thus cheers our lowly dwellings?

The second depicted the adventure of Achère. In the arms of the Queen, the wife of the poor

* Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?

wounded vine-dresser was seen fainting, and her royal mistress endeavouring to recover her; underneath this picture was inscribed the following line:

Et ses pleurs ont montré qu'elle étoit vraiment Reine *.
And in her tears the Queen stood all confest.

In the front of this sacred decoration, amid the immense concourse of people who had flocked to this feast from the neighbouring villages and cities, and in the presence of many persons of consequence and landed estate, were proclaimed, *a good mother*, *a good chief of a family*, and *two good daughters*. *The good mother* was the wife of a mechanic, who, notwithstanding she had brought up eleven of her own children, had taken into her family a poor abandoned orphan whom she suckled, and supported till he married. To this young man, she requested the reward given to herself might be transferred. The *good chief of a family* was a husbandman, who, at the age of twenty, lost his father; he immediately became himself a father to his three brothers and five sisters; brought up and supported them all, and by the labour of his

* Et vera effusis lacrymis patuit Regina.

hands got together sufficient property to portion off in marriage two of his sisters. The *good daughters* were two village girls, who went out to service by turns, so that the one was enabled to take care of an aged father, who was in his ninety-first year, and had long lost the use of his limbs, while the other provided for his subsistence. Thus, crowned with general applause, these virtuous persons were conducted to church, to return thanks to Him who is the author of all good. Two clergymen, belonging to the household of the Count d'Artois, and charged by him with an offering, preached two very affecting sermons; after which, the *good mother*, the *good daughters*, and the *good chief of his family*, were attended back again by the same party to a repast, during which they were waited upon by the greatest persons in the assembly; and the healths of their most illustrious patrons were drank amid the blessings and joyful shouts of all present. A man, who came thither as a spectator only, who was a post-master, yielding to a generous impulse of his soul, suddenly came forward, and requested that he might be allowed to pay the land-tax of that year for all the poor inhabitants of three parishes. His request was granted with an universal burst of acclamation; and thus it was that one good deed produced

another. The royal beneficence spread its influence through all ranks of society, and while it gave consolation to some, it afforded to others an exalted example; checking the progress of calamity, and furthering that of virtuous exertion. The people also, in the praise they bestowed upon the model, felt a blended wish to form themselves after it, and from celebrating the good deeds of others became desirous of acting well themselves. Such was then the state of the public mind; such were then the feasts that engaged the attention of the French nation.

The following year (1777) was distinguished by the tour which the Queen's brother, the Emperor Joseph, made through France. He appeared at Court, viewed the capital, and visited all the finest provinces of this great kingdom. Then it was that every where one uniform emulation reigned, one great and generous rivalship between the purest affections, and the most amiable demonstrations of attachment. The King and the people, the former idolizing his Queen, and the latter enthusiastically attached to both, were equally anxious to shew Joseph II. how fervently his sister was beloved. The Queen, on her part, was also eager to prove to her brother how entirely she possessed the tender regards of her

virtuous consort, and the affections of her grateful subjects; while the Emperor, on his part, seized every opportunity of evincing the inward joy he felt, at beholding the promised happiness which all things throughout this glorious empire seemed then to be preparing for his illustrious sister.

Among various pathetic scenes which these diverse emotions of tender interest produced, there occurred one in particular which it is impossible to describe; all that we can do, is to give an imperfect sketch of it—imagination must fill up the picture:

The Queen came to Paris to see the Play of Iphigenia in Aulis. The Emperor sate next to her at the theatre, and the Royal Family filled up the box. The audience received them with the liveliest testimonies of joy; but all this was trifling when compared to the transport which was excited by an incident in the piece. At that part in which the young and beauteous Iphigenia passes in triumph through the midst of the Grecian camp, a chorus of Thessalians exclaims,

Que d'attraits! Que de Majesté!
Que de grâces! Que de beauté!
Chantons, célébrons notre reine.

Behold her beauteous and majestic form!
What grace divine our youthful Queen displays!
Loud swell the strain to celebrate her praise.

Scarcely were these words uttered when the allusion struck the minds of all. Not only were the eyes of the whole theatre turned towards the young and beautiful MARIA-ANTOINETTA; not only was every applauding hand directed towards the place she occupied, but even the chorus was encored, a thing unheard of in this drama. The actor, who performed the part of Achilles, overjoyed at seeing himself all at once made the organ of the sentiments of the French people, pointed directly to the Queen's box, repeating to his Thessalian followers,

Chantez, celebrez notre Reine.

The people in every part of the theatre stood up, and joined their voices with those of the actors. The Queen, who was standing, leaned upon her brother, entirely overcome by her sensibility, and the grateful pleasure that filled her breast; she endeavoured to withdraw herself from the homage so eagerly pressed upon her; and, although amid the confused sensations that rushed in upon her at once, she was incapable of giving expression to her feelings, she nevertheless succeeded most effectually in manifesting

them to all, for not a gesture escaped her, not a tear fell from her eye, that did not contribute to augment the enthusiastic ardour with which her every motion was attended to. Her Brother, and the Princes of the Royal Family, bowed by turns to the audience, acknowledging the justice of their allusion; and then, turning to the Queen, congratulated her upon the splendid triumph she enjoyed, professing themselves delighted at the idea of adding to it by their presence. Along the passages, upon the stairs, and to the very door of the theatre, was this chorus repeated; every place rang with those favourite words,

Chantons, célébrons notre Reine.

What a moment must this have been for MARIA-ANTOINETTA! How deep must she have drunk of the cup of joy!

A new delight awaited her, and such an one as her affectionate heart must have felt in all its strongest influence—the veneration and universal esteem which her august brother every where inspired.—One of his first expressions that made its way through the Court circle, was the tribute he paid to filial piety. When introduced by the Queen to the King, and to all the Prin-

cesses of the Royal Family, he addressed the latter in the following words: " I feel myself " particularly happy in this opportunity of per- " sonally declaring to you how deep an impres- " sion your conduct towards Louis XV. whom " I sincerely loved, has made upon my heart. " The generous and noble sacrifice of your own " life, to preserve that of your father, is a trait " of heroism that will never be effaced from my " memory."

Some time after, when he was at Versailles, waiting in the *Œil de Bœuf* with the croud, till the door of the King's apartment should be thrown open, some expressions of surprise were addressed to him, to which he made answer, " It " is no more than what I am accustomed to; " such is my daily practice when I pay my de- " voirs to my mother." When at Paris, the first visit that the Emperor made was to the Military School, the second to the Invalids, the third to the Hospitals. With the same spirit of inquiry he examined the Institution of the Deaf and Dumb; the public seminaries, the courts of justice, the academies, the manufactories; all those useful establishments that reflected honor upon or rendered service to human nature, Joseph II. made the particular objects of his investigation;

nothing escaped his notice; and in all his enquiries the exalted character of his heart and understanding shone forth. His unassuming affability, the great simplicity of his manners, his eagerness to retire from the homage which every one was anxious to pay him, served but to draw upon himself still more lively proofs of public admiration; proofs that must have excited the most gratifying emotions in his imperial breast. Of this many instances occurred: once, at the *Theatre François*, which he preferred above all the other theatres in the capital, when present at the representation of the tragedy of Œdipus; it was his intentions to have remained incognito—but in that part where Jocasta, speaking of Laius to her son, says,

Ce Roi, plus grand que sa fortune
Dédaignoit, comme vous, une pompe importune;
On ne voyoit jamais marcher devant son char
D'un nombreux bataillon le fastueux rempart—

So did this Monarch, like yourself, disdain
To borrow greatness from the pompous train;
No warlike legions led his car along,
In proud seclusion from th' admiring throng—

the Emperor plainly perceived, in the marked and continued plaudits with which these verses were received, and which were directed to the box where he sought to conceal himself, that

princes are not indebted to the pomp of state for the purest demonstrations of public respect.

At another time, when he expressed a wish to attend one of the sittings of the French Academy, he added a request, by way of condition, that his name should not be mentioned; this was readily consented to, and faithfully observed. D'Alembert, among several other synonymous terms which he read, selected those of *modesty* and *simplicity*; the Emperor was recognized in every sentence; the warmest admiration and applause followed; but his name never once passed the lips of the assembly.

Having also a desire to hear the famous Advocate-General Séguier plead in a cause of importance that was coming on, he entered the grated gallery of the grand chamber of Parliament as privately as possible, the pleadings being already begun. Some eye, more penetrating than the rest, discovered him, and his name was murmured through the court, 'till it reached the magistrate who was speaking; he had not been informed of the Emperor's intention, and it required all that presence of mind, and elegant fertility of conception, for which he was so remarkable, in conjunction with the high respect

he entertained for the Emperor's personal character, to have conceived so instantaneously one of the most dignified, most pleasing compliments, ever paid in the temple of justice to a virtuous Prince, whose amiable qualities justified the gratifying tribute*.

* A faithful subject, and a grateful servant, of this august family of the imperial throne, hopes for the indulgence of his reader while he yields to the irresistible impulse of his feelings, and seizes this opportunity of attaching the eulogium of the brother, to the honest service of duty and reverence he is anxious to fulfil towards the sister: presuming upon this hope, he transcribes here, by way of note, one out of several literary offerings, composed in honour of the Emperor's visit to France. It is a small poem in the style and language of Anacreon, and, even in translation, it preserves all its original claim to delicacy of sentiment, and simplicity of expression. In truth, I studiously dwell on every subject capable of affording the mind some few ideas on which it may rest awhile with pleasure to itself. So many horrors have I to tell of, so many pictures of barbarous cruelty have I to draw, that I willingly court the illusion of a moment.

THE EAGLE IN SEARCH OF JOVE.

By M. Cheviot, Graduate of the University of Paris.

King of birds, whom seekest thou? What disquiets and afflicts thy royal breast, O king of birds? Whither dost thou speed thy flight, thou minister of Jove? O whither doth thy

Joseph II. did not travel into France merely to see the capital, and visit the Court. He had other

broad wing bear thee? Why, with uncertain course, dost thou wander through these climes? Never hast thou heretofore perched among our lilies; and, must Olympus' top no more boast itself as thine abode? Say why thy talon no longer wields the red thunderbolt? Why those pinions, that were wont to pierce the clouds, now skim the earth with faltering vigour? Why is thine eye, that erst with steadfast gaze drank in the solar ray, downcast and sad? King of birds, whom seekest thou? What disquiets and afflicts thy royal breast, O king of birds!

'Tis Jove I seek, and Jove eludes my view. Hither, 'tis said, with all his sacred brightness veiled, he bends his steps; in mortal guise he comes to visit the happy land where the air lily shifts its stately head. That lily, whose modest charms a youthful Sovereign, like the beauteous rose, heightens with her own. 'Tis Jove I seek, but Jove eludes my view.

Rest, king of birds, from all thy care: no veil could hide thy master from our eyes—a stranger has appeared among us; in mortal person, unattended, and without pomp he came; his habit simple, unadorned his car, his table frugal; shunning with anxious modesty, the general approbation and applause. But in beneficence, and native majesty, he walks a GOD! Yes, the GOD's confest! Rest, king of birds, from all thy care; no veil could hide thy master from our eyes.

I marked him as with fixed observance he viewed our warrior bands; pleasure sate on his brow, while they pursued the

motives for his journey. He wished to be thoroughly acquainted with the resources of every kind possessed by the beautiful country over which his august sister reigned. All the establishments to be found in the provinces, manufactories, warehouses, ports, arsenals, hospitals, building docks, the beautiful country-houses on his road, were objects of his curiosity; he visited and examined every thing, and took notes of every thing that struck him, that he might one day enrich his own States with whatever he conceived might tend to their prosperity.

In the Provinces through which he passed the people crowded the roads he travelled. It was not only the Emperor they were eager to see, but, as they said, "the brother of their beautiful Queen." They endeavoured to find some resemblance between him and a Princess who was the object of adoration to all France. They could not get the better of the astonishment raised by

bloodless conflict, and as I marked I thought 'twas *Mars* I saw. I beheld him seated among the Muses, and as he listened to their scientific harmony, I pronounced him to be *Apollo*; I was deceived, 'tis *Jove* himself. The Muses warm not the breast of *Mars; Apollo* seeks not the battle's strife. Rest, king of birds, from all thy care; no veil could hide thy master from our eyes.

the sight of so powerful a Prince, travelling without guards, courtiers, or retinue, and showing a complete indifference for ceremony; putting up at the first inn in his way, and content with a deer-skin spread on a paillase for his bed. His flattering expressions and witty sayings, which he knew so well how to place, were every where preserved. In his way to Brest, he stopped a whole day to examine the fine harbour of Nantes in Bretagne. It was at the time of the commencement of the insurrection of the United States of America. The ships being all dressed with their colours, in compliment to the illustrious visitor of Nantes, the new flag of the insurgents, on which were thirteen stars, a symbol of the new constellation rising in the west, was pointed out to the Emperor, who turned away his eyes: "I cannot look at that," said he to the Count de Menou, the commander of the place, who attended him, "my trade is that "of a Royalist."*

On the 2d of June 1777, the Emperor took leave of Versailles, leaving his sister happy, and every where the object of regard; France at

* This wise expression, which the Emperor afterwards repeated at Versailles, was first used at Nantes.

peace, and replete with hope; the King intent upon the public welfare and idolized, the nation tranquil, never thinking even of a possibility of being agitated; society full of charms, and arts of every kind contending which should shed the greatest lustre on the reign of Louis XVI. and MARIA-ANTOINETTA.

In this year that war broke out which the French nation so eagerly provoked—a war in which the people themselves involved their Monarch, and which, notwithstanding that every body regarded it as glorious in its cause and progress, has proved most disastrous in its consequence. MARIA-ANTOINETTA still more and more conciliated the affections of her people, by fresh proofs of her goodness, manifesting herself in every respect their fellow-citizen, contemplating with ardour the national glory, and following with her own anxious wishes all those measures with which the mind of the King was continually taken up, for the re-establishment of a naval force. Then, on the eve of an action, how great was her agitation! And when a victory was gained, with what amiable pity for the sufferings of the wounded, or for the 1773.

affliction in which the relatives of the slain were plunged, did she blend her triumph! "Alas! "poor Mr. du Chaffault!" cried she, after the battle of Ushant, in which that brave Admiral was severely wounded, "How heartily do I "lament his lot: would that I were a bird, I "would fly to nurse him." This tender expression was incessantly repeated by every mouth. What patriotic spirit did the immediate influence of the Queen kindle in the breasts of all around her; the ladies of her household, those who belonged to the Court, and those whom she honoured with her intimacy! while valour felt itself roused to greater deeds by the suffrage of beauty. Versailles was almost deserted for the port where laid those fleets, distinguished by their successful contests, and those single vessels which had signalized themselves by separate engagements. Where also rode, in all their valorous pre-eminence, the *Belle-Poule*, the *Surveillante*, whose exploits almost exceed the reach of human credence. Numerous were the attentions paid to the officers; boundless the generous offerings to the common men; and how general were the repartees full of native fire, which burst from the lips of the gallant crews amid their

joyous acknowledgments*! To what bold achievements did these speeches lead the hearer's hopes! Where now is the navy of France? Where are now its ships and its crews?

In the month of May, of the same year, the Queen sent to Paris an order to give a great number of unhappy parents their liberty, who had been imprisoned for not having paid the month's nursing of their respective children. —In June, she set about establishing at Versailles an asylum for poor mothers and their offspring, similar to that which the minister of S. Sulpice had instituted in his parish. The object which the beneficence of the Queen thus suddenly selected was generally remarked; all

* An instance of this kind occurred in the visit which three illustrious females, whose beauty, wit, and amiable deportment rendered them the ornament of the French Court, made to Brest to view the glorious wreck of the *Surveillante*. These were, the Princess of Bouillon, the Princess of Hénin, and the Duchess of Biron—after having loaden the sailors with their bounty, one of the ladies asked them, Why they did not nail their flag to the mast as the English had done? "Princess," replied one of the brave fellows, "Ho-"nour supported it for us." See *the Courier de l'Europe*, *Oct.* 1779.

ranks were eager to divine the reason, and at length conceived they had discovered it, but dreaded lest they might be mistaken in their conjecture. The month of July arrived, and confirmed all their hopes. The King ordered *Te Deum* to be sung in the chapel at Versailles, announcing that his *beloved wife and partner of his throne* was in the fourth month of her pregnancy. —Let us awhile recur to the records of the times, and we shall perceive how absolutely this amiable Queen reigned in the hearts of her subjects.

Who can avoid being struck with the affecting simplicity, the natural tenderness, that appear throughout the letter which the good Louis XVI. wrote to the Archbishop of Paris? "The Queen's "pregnancy is an assurance, that the blessing "of GOD is upon us: The law that we have "prescribed to ourselves to submit to his Pro- "vidence all the events of our reign, prompts "us to inform you by this letter that your di- "recting a special prayer for the preservation of "the Queen, and of the object of our hopes, "will be very agreeable to us."

This worthy prelate in his mandatory letter thus expressed himself: "The Queen has al-

ready interested Heaven in her favour by an act of charity, at the remembrance of which all hearts must be moved. If the prayers of the poor are so efficacious, what may we not hope from those of so many unfortunate persons unexpectedly liberated and restored to their families, to their children who were crying to their fathers for support, while they were the innocent cause of their imprisonment?

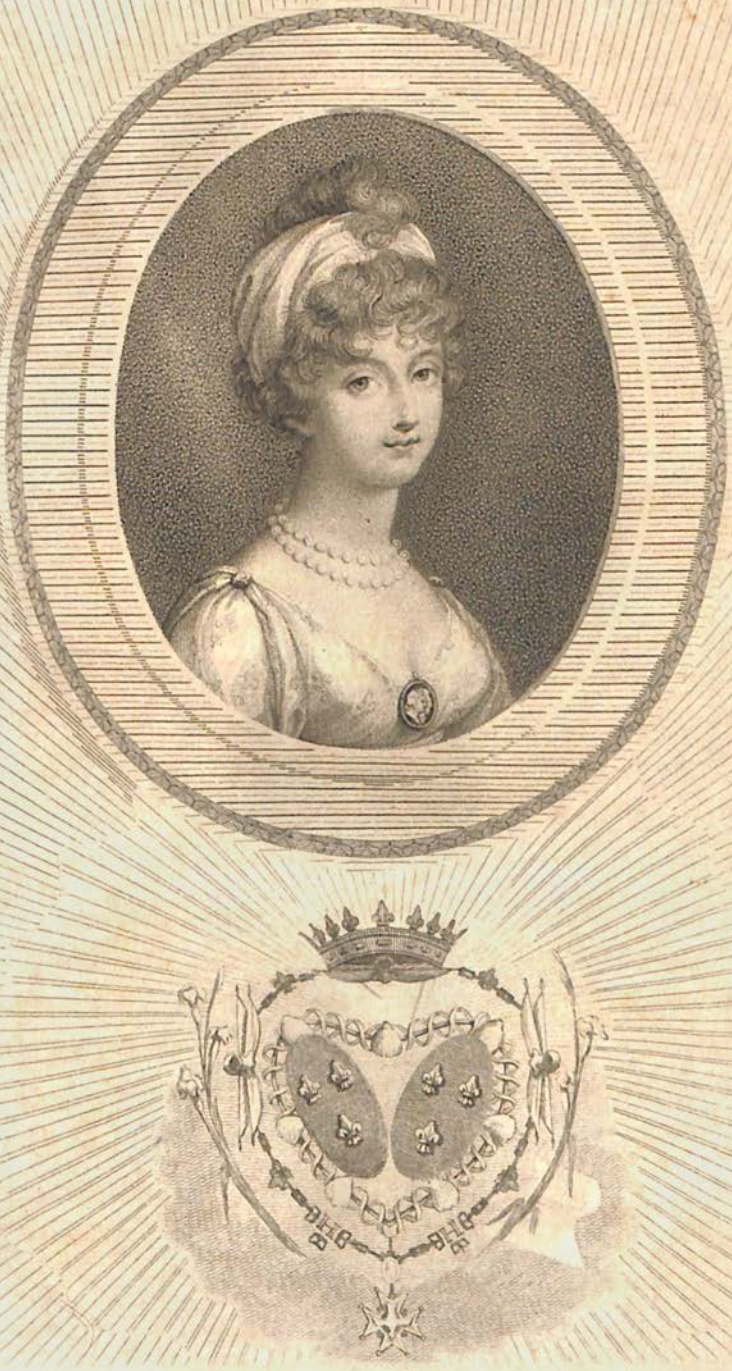
Prayers were also put up with great fervor to Almighty GOD, by all the various communions of Christians, and by all the religious societies, whose peculiar modes of worship, whether more or less private in their nature, the spirit of charity tolerated in France. Here, I confess, my heart is shaken with tender emotion and grief, my eyes fill with tears and obscure my sight, while I trace the following prayer which the Avignon Jews, resident at Paris, read every week.

" May He who blessed our holy mothers, who
" visited his servants Sarah and Hannah in thei,
" affliction, bless with his support, visit with
" his comforting grace, and in his almighty power
" preserve our Sovereign MARIA-ANTOINETTA

" Arch-Duchess of Austria, Queen of France,
" the well-beloved and favourite object of her
" people's joy. May the King of Kings keep her
" in his especial favour; may He, in his mercy,
" fulfil the desire of her heart, and grant to his
" servant to bear a race of men, mighty and vir-
" tuous; may He preserve the fruit of her body,
" and cause her to bear Kings and rulers of na-
" tions; may she be a joyful mother, and become
" as a fruitful vine; may the ardent wishes of the
" French not be frustrated, that they may be-
" hold the branch come forth of the lineage of
" the Bourbons; may this branch grow in fa-
" vour with GOD and man, worthy of its parent's
" name, and that of its ancestry; and may
" those whose eyes shall see it know that the
" branch is blessed of the Lord!"

O you, who then were born to France *; you, who henceforth remain the only one of *those branches*, which from time to time have *filled with hope* the bosoms of Louis XVI. of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, and of the French people; you, who are at this instant present to my mind's eye,

* Madame Royale, now Duchess of Angoulême.



MARIE THERESE, CHARLOTTE DE FRANCE,

DUCHESSE D'ANGOULEME.NEE.LE 19 DEC. 1778.

while I retrace all these painful recollections; you, who, with that affecting resemblance of your parent's royal mien, preserve with his candour all the nobleness of your auguſt mother, ah! may these wishes at least one day reach you! may *the ardent wishes of the French people* not be for ever fruſtrated! may *the blessings of the Lord, still resting upon the lineage of the Bourbons*, manifest itself in you and that young Prince, who calls your heart his own, not more in right of marriage, than by mutual claims of wisdom, moderation, and goodness, which you both equally possess! may *the King of Kings keep* you *in his especial favour*; may He cause you *to bear Kings and Rulers of Nations*; may those whose eyes shall see you seated on the throne of *your ancestry* know that you are *blessed of the Lord!*

It was especially when the Queen enjoyed some instants of happiness, that she was the more eager to display the goodness of her heart, and to confer some new favours upon her subjects. We have seen her Majesty on the first discovery of her pregnant state, consecrating the dawning hope by an elevated act of beneficence; and in her fourth month we have seen her, as it were, repeating that consecration. As soon as her infant blessed her sight, she pur-

chased the release of all those unfortunate fathers who were still confined. The day in which she repaired to the cathedral church of Paris, to return thanks for her recovery, she was seen to approach the altar of the Virgin, surrounded by an hundred poor virtuous young women, and their husbands, to whom she had just portioned them off in marriage. Each party had received a gift of five hundred livres, besides a complete wedding suit for the bridegroom and his bride. She also engaged to pay the expences for the nursing of the first child, and promised to give one third more than what had been already distributed, to every mother that should nurse her infant herself. This generous donation was not paid out of the Royal Treasury, but from the Queen's private purse; for her heart alone determined, according to circumstances, upon the nature and objects of her bounty. Louis XVI. too much delighted in the virtues of his beloved consort, too much enjoyed the praises universally lavished upon her, to deprive her of the merit of exercising her amiable qualities: " My people know " not yet the full extent of the Queen's worth," he would often say; and, at the time I speak of, he gave away a great deal privately, merely, that the beneficence of the Queen should

alone be made the subject of conversation. On this day, the King and Queen, as they were returning to Versailles, were stopped and harangued before the statue of Henry IV. by the people, who felt themselves happy in uniting the names of Henry IV. and of Louis XVI.; eagerly blending in the benedictions of their love the memory of one with the presence of the other.

It now appeared as if Heaven had granted the Queen to become a mother, that she might find consolation in the afflictive moment which awaited her filial affection. The daughter of MARIA-ANTOINETTA was scarcely entered into life, when Maria-Theresa was about to descend into the grave. 29th Nov. 1780.

This Princess died, as she had lived, with exalted greatness and feeling of soul, parent of her people, as well as mother of her children; superior not only to her sex, but to human nature; she died, in short, full of good works in the sight of GOD, and in the opinion of the world.

On the day of her death she dictated three letters, to her three daughters, the Duchess of Parma, the Queen of Naples, and the Queen of France. The last she exhorted to favour the

return of peace with all her influence, and to watch every circumstance that might afford the smallest prospect of its restoration. Two hours before she expired, she said to the Emperor—
" My son, the virtues which ever attend you,
" at this moment surround my bed, and assuage
" the sufferings of my last hour. I know not
" that I have any thing more to recommend to
" your attention—except the love of peace."

When MARIA-ANTOINETTA was informed that her mother was dead, she was taken exceedingly ill, and was seized with a spitting of blood, which alarmed her for some days. She kept herself retired for a time, in order to give free vent to her sorrow; and saw no one, not even the princes of the blood. When she again appeared in public, her countenance, her grief, her noble air, her beauty, were so striking to every one, as seated under a black canopy she received the condolence of the Court, that the impression they together made upon those who beheld the awful ceremony, will never be effaced from their recollection. Every one agreed that she proved how richly she deserved to have such a mother, by the manner in which she conducted herself under her melancholy loss.



J. Venanz. pinx.

J. Vendramini sculp.

MARIA THERESIA,

REG. HUNG. BOH. MOR. ARCH. AUS. ROM. IMP. SEMPER AUGUSTA.

It was at this period that the Queen was first perceived to have gained a degree of influence in politics. Till then none of her ideas seemed to have inclined towards them, and the old plan of the ministers of that day was, that of uniformly cautioning the King against what they termed the Austrian ascendancy. But, having once become a mother, and fostering in her breast the hope, in which the hearts of the French participated, of seeing a Dauphin born to the throne, MARIA-ANTOINETTA felt herself more a Frenchwoman than at first, and formed her judgment accordingly. Sister to his Imperial Majesty, she exerted all the ingratiating influence of her fraternal love, to induce that Monarch, whom the enemies of France already had marked out as a powerful ally, to remain neuter. At the very instant in which the orators of the British senate were declaring, in the most lofty style, the Emperor to be their natural ally, and considered themselves as paying him a tribute of applause, whilst representing him as above the restraints of family connection, celebrating his virtues, and omitting nothing that might rouse his passion for glory, the sister of Joseph II. in the secret converse of familiar intercourse, turned the attention of her brother to the dying wishes of their common parent. These

wishes she herself fulfilled, and became the bond of peace between her husband and her brother, between France and Austria. And thus were those malevolent and basely prejudiced minds, who were not disposed to allow that nations have any other dependence for repose than national jealousies, completely disappointed; whence they became accustomed to talk of the *monstrous* alliance between Austria and France; yet thus did facts, more convincing than all the discussions in the world, demonstrate that such an alliance might be made productive of the most beneficial consequences, not only to the two powers thus allied, but to all Europe, which their quarrels had involved in trouble, and deluged with blood*.'

* See Mr. Wraxall's famous speech in the English House of Commons, on the 25th of January, 1791.

" Providence, who watches over the welfare of Britain, " has recently called to heaven a great princess, who, in the " decline of her existence, became incapable of attending to " the government of her empire. Her advanced age, her " pious principles, and, above all other considerations, her " three daughters married to three Princes of the house of " Bourbon, all concurred to render her anxious for the pre- " servation of pacific measures. Her death has at once " changed the cabinet system of Vienna. Joseph II. heir to " all her virtues, as well as her extensive domains, possessing

The moment at length arrived in which this object of general hope, a Dauphin, was born. He entered the world amidst the triumphs of Oct. 22, 1781.

" also every peculiar good quality of his sex, full of energy, " active, of an exalted mind, brave, and athirst for glory, well " acquainted not only with the genius of the people, whom " he governs, but with that of a great part of Europe, par- " ticularly France, *that restless neighbour whom he must ever* " *regard with a jealous eye*; at the same time taking every " opportunity to demonstrate his attachment to the English; " always occupied in devising means of making his name il- " lustrious, and of increasing the prosperity of the empire by " advancing its commercial interests; *far above all consider-* " *ations of family connections*," &c. &c. And the triple temptation which this member was so anxious to hold out to *this powerful ally*, was to *vote him a million sterling*, to offer him in India the settlements of *Malaca, Ceylon, Cochin, and Negapatam, and to open the port of Antwerp.* And, at length, willing to express in one single phrase the incalculable advantages of such an alliance, he went on: " A noble Lord has, " upon a recent occasion in Parliament, made use, and that " repeatedly, of the celebrated expression *Delenda est Car-* " *thago.* We must destroy the marine of France. It has " been asked by what means is this destruction to be ef- " fected? I have this moment answered that question. En- " ter into an alliance with the Emperor, and *the navy of the* " *house of Bourbon is no more.*"

Had the government of France known how to preserve the monarchy, France might have had continual reason to extol the service which, during the American war, had been rendered her by a Queen, sprung from the race of Cæsars.

his father, and at a time when those numerous public benefits were every where seen and felt with which Louis XVI. notwithstanding he was engaged in a system of warfare of incalculable extent, never ceased to enrich his kingdom—benefits of wise and humane laws, of noble and charitable establishments.

What an event was this for France; we may add, for all Europe! Three hours after the birth of this precious child, three hundred couriers set off from Versailles, to bear the news to every part of the kingdom, and to all foreign courts. The capital was very soon informed of it. Scarcely was the cry of *a Dauphin, a Dauphin*, heard in the palace, ere it echoed through Versailles, made its way along the public roads, and resounded in every corner of Paris.

The shops were instantly shut up, every one rushed to the places of worship to offer up thanksgivings to Heaven; dances were formed in the open streets; alms were delivered to the poor; and prisoners were set at liberty. The King, transported with joy, gave the most ingenuous proofs of it to the Court and all his people. Like Henry IV. he appeared at the windows with the child in his arms, shewing

him to the croud that flocked in repeated multitudes to shower their blessings upon it and the father. He received the deputations of sovereign courts, of municipalities, and of all the trading companies*. High and low, rich and poor, were all alike permitted to draw near to him with their felicitations; his happiness was the happiness of all, and the joy which he witnessed in others increased his own.

The Queen, in the mean while, had not lost sight of what might be termed her favourite deed of piety, she had already sent to give freedom to an hundred women, who were confined in consequence of not being able to defray the expense of nursing their children; she yet, how-

* The King was very fond of mechanics, and his usual work of recreation was making of locks. The company of locksmiths, belonging to Versailles, came upon this happy occasion to pay their dutiful congratulations, presenting him at the same time with a production of their trade, which they denominated a *master-piece:* it was a secret lock; the King desired that he might be left to find out the secret himself. This he did; but at the instant that he touched the spring, there darted, from the centre of the lock, a *Dauphin* admirably worked in steel. The King was much delighted, and with a full heart declared, *that the ingenious present of these worthy people gratified him much,* and with his own hands he made them a handsome remuneration.

ever, knew only that she was a mother, but was ignorant whether of a prince or princess. The King, with his wonted tender solicitude, had requested her to consent to remain ignorant of her infant's sex till the second day, fearful that joy or disappointment might have an equally bad effect upon her constitution; but, on the other hand, the continuance of her anxiety might also be dangerous. At length, after having himself struggled for several hours with the secret, he found that he could no longer withstand the entreaties of the beloved of his soul. Seated on the bed near the Queen, he listened while she declared to him, with the most enchanting complacency of manner, that if indeed her wish had always been for a son, it was a wish inspired by her anxiety for the commonweal, and the satisfaction of the King. So resigned did she appear, so determined to receive without a murmur whatever Heaven had given, and so perfectly convinced was she that it was a daughter, from the mysterious silence preserved, that the King could no longer contain himself; he rose, and called aloud to the attendants, *to bring M. the Dauphin to the Queen.* At these words the grateful—shall I say the happy? Yes, that moment happiness was her's; the happy MARIA-ANTOINETTA raised herself up in the bed, and spread out her

arms towards the King, when this august pair, locked in each other's embrace, mingled tears so full of rapture, that even the Dauphin was allowed to remain beside them for some minutes without being perceived.

It was at this epoch when a personage of noble and sacred character, a pastor of the church, grown old in all the apostolic virtues, beloved for his numberless charities, admired for the heroic firmness of his conscience—it was, in short, at this period, that the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Beaumont, drew near the end of his mortal career. He lived, however, to witness the birth of the infant for whom he had lifted up his prayers to Heaven; he lived to bless him, and to sing the song of Simeon. Who, as they read the following testimony, which he left to the world a few days before he quitted it for ever, will for a moment harbour the thought that such a man could make religion an organ of flattery, and dishonour his last moments by unmeaning praise? "How forcible," said he, while foretelling the future character of the new-born Prince, "how forcible must be the impressions "which parental precept, supported by exam- "ple, shall make upon his mind. How shall "he better learn to govern than by having the

" model of a GOOD King constantly before his " eyes! From the heart and pattern of his august " mother, he will derive that goodness which " gives to authority its most pleasing charm, " and insures it universal respect, that sensibi- " lity which inclines the possessor to wipe away " the tears from the faces of all the children of " misfortune, that beneficence whose chief en- " joyment is to provide for all their wants!"

To form an adequate idea of the rejoicings which at this time pervaded the whole country of France, it will be necessary to imagine all that affectionate loyalty, personal happiness, patriotic principle, magnificence, and wealth, could effect by their united exertions. One instance I will stop awhile to recount, in order to attend the Queen in one of her triumphant gratifications, before I go on to relate the many trials she underwent.

On the 21st of January, 1782, at half after nine in the morning, in a beautiful sunshiny day, the Queen, now the mother of a Dauphin, set out from *La Muette* to go to Paris, in all the splendour of regal majesty, and arrayed in all the divinity of her charms. The equipage was the same as attended her at the ceremony of the

coronation. The Queen was accompanied in her own carriage by Madame Elizabeth and Madame Adelaïde, the one the sister, and the other the aunt of the King; the Princess Louisa Adelaïde of Condé, the Princess of Lamballe, lady-superintendant of her Majesty's household, and the Princess of Chimay, her maid of honour. In eighteen other carriages were the ladies of the Queen's palace, the ladies in waiting on the other Princesses, the first officers, the subordinate ones, and other attendants. All the carriages belonging to the Queen were drawn by eight white horses, whose natural beauty was greatly set off by the splendour of the harness, and the plumes which nodded on their heads. One half of the King's life-guards, in full uniform, escorted this long and brilliant train, which went slowly forward. The Queen had desired that on both sides of her coach there should be a space left between the files, that the view of the people might not be obstructed. A party of troops, from the capital, which came out to meet them, preceded the whole: another had also been distributed at the several posts, and each division joined the cavalcade as it came up. A third party was stationed, in double line, from the gate of the Champs Elysées to the porch of the cathedral at Paris.

The good King had issued a decree of council, ordering, that on the Queen's entrance into Paris it should be publicly proclaimed, "That her "Majesty being desirous of consecrating, by "fresh acts of beneficence, the happy hour in "which GOD had graciously vouchsafed that a "Dauphin should be given to the nation—and "wishing to give her loyal city of Paris some "especial proofs of her good will," exempted from the capitation tax, not only all those citizens, tradespeople, and mechanics, who were absolutely poor, but those who were hardly to be reckoned above mediocrity of condition.

The mother of the Dauphin was hailed by the blessings of grateful hearts, as well as by the affectionate wishes and joyful acclamations of all ranks of people. Having offered up her thanksgivings to GOD, first in the cathedral, afterwards at the church of St. Geneviève, before the remains of the guardian saint of Paris, and lastly, at the foot of the sepulchre of Clovis, founder of the monarchy, she repaired to the guildhall, where a most sumptuous entertainment was prepared by the municipality, and where all the Princes of the blood were waiting to receive her, with the nobles of the state, the whole Court, the city, and the people.

The King left *La Muette* three hours after the Queen, taking the same road, and attended with the same regal state, the same acclamations greeting him as he went along: at Paris he fulfilled the same devotional duties at the same shrines, and afterwards went to the guildhall with the Prince his brother, and the superior officers of the crown, escorted by the life-guards, light-horse, and gendarmes, who were followed by the royal falconry.

Before their Majesties sate down to the royal banquet, they shewed themselves to the people several times in the balcony, fitted up for the view of the firework that was to follow: every time they made their appearance their condescension was acknowledged with the liveliest transports of joy, bursting from the happy hearts of multitudes that were assembled before the place, and were every instant increasing in numbers.

The festival began. In a hall 134 feet in length, 50 wide, and 28 high, the royal banquet, consisting of 78 covers, was prepared. The King and Queen were seated at the upper end of the table by themselves; on each side, the royal family; then seventy ladies, of illustrious family, most brilliantly conspicuous for beauty and attire.

In the adjacent halls, tables were spread for the lords of the Court, and the officers of the royal family. Wherever the eye directed its gaze, it was arrested by the mingled splendor of marble, gold, lapis lazuli, and porphyry. On all sides outward symbols and declaratory emblems reflected the subject of the day, and the idolized objects of the people's love. Under the same canopy were seen, in one part, the portraits of their Majesties, in another their busts, united by garlands of flowers; on one side, dolphins and eagles; on another, vases of gold, from each of which issued a new-blown lily. Melodious symphonies expressed, in alternate movements, the softest sentiment, and the liveliest joy; while every quarter of an hour, the place resounded with the mingled cries of *Long live the King, the Queen, the Dauphin!* cries which interrupted the instrumental concerts, only to substitute a harmony a thousand times more rapturous.

After dinner there was a drawing-room and cards, and the feast was terminated by a fire-work. The subject-scene represented the temple of Hymen; columns, and open porticos, formed a magnificent rotundo: at the entrance of the temple, France was seen receiving, from the hands of the conjugal deity, the precious

child so recently born. In the interior part of the design an altar was placed, on which the offerings of the French people were seen burning. Eagles and cherubs embellished the crown-work of the fabric; which was ornamented with festoons, ciphers, and emblematical figures. This superb firework was followed by a general illumination. Their Majesties, who walked along the streets, and round the various places that were more brilliant in their effect than the rest, perceived at every step they took, devices and transparencies, that most unequivocally expressed those popular regards which were so universally displayed. The general joy afforded them still more unequivocal testimonies of their people's attachment, which was strikingly apparent in the common gaiety that animated the dances and the entertainments, and in that uniform sentiment which caused those engaged in them to break off, as soon as their Majesties approached, that they might surround them as they passed, and enjoy the still greater satisfaction of heaping upon them their unbounded applause. I would here ask my reader, while we together take this retrospect of a period only eight years previous to the French Revolution, if he does not, together with myself, feel a sensation rising in his breast, which we should both alike attempt in vain to

describe? Does it not appear to him that he is reading the detail of a dream, or that he is himself dreaming? Does he not ask himself, where and what were we then? and does he not look around him and enquire, where and what are we now?

Hitherto I have recounted events in the life of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, since her departure from Austria, as an historian only, and not as an eye-witness; but as an historian who felt himself eager to bring to view the glorious character of his royal mistress, and who, because he is highly zealous for her honour, has in no instance paid her aught of homage to which truth could dispute her claim; the records of the time all attest the fidelity of my relation; there was not one which I did not strictly investigate before I took up my pen. My mother, herself, began the collection of facts I have here given to the world; separated from the object of her revering love, she never ceased anxiously to gather from the journals and gazettes of the day, from the public records, and private correspondence, nay, sometimes from details, which the noble-minded and courteous Maria-Theresa would often deign to give her, some happy event, some charming and virtuous instance of conduct in which she

might again behold MARIA-ANTOINETTA—whatever was printed on this her favourite subject she procured, and what she could not so obtain she copied. My father shared in this interesting work; and I leave the reader to judge with what promptitude I joined them, impelled by all the ardour of a youthful mind, by a personal devotion, the source of which was in me one and the same with the source of life.

I am now about to relate events which have happened within my own cognizance, such indeed as I have witnessed with my own eyes, or have heard an account of immediately upon their occurrence from my friends, whom I believe as readily as I would the testimony of my own senses.

This birth of a Dauphin, which at the time it took place made every Frenchman happy, appeared to me also the most signal good fortune, being in the first place the cause of my journey into France, and eventually the occasion of my fixing my residence in that country.

I had studied at the University of Vienna, under the patronage of the Empress. She desired to be herself informed of the progress that I

made, and to have the certificates of my application and good conduct laid before her; she was satisfied with the report; and, when I was no more than nineteen, gave me a place in the chancery department of Bohemia and Austria, adding to it a pension. At the age of twenty-two years I came into office; and every year, till I entered my twenty-seventh, Maria-Theresa, who was anxious I should be deserving of her bounty, increased my salary and her own private gifts, rendering my good-fortune still more acceptable from its holding out to my view a proof of her being thoroughly satisfied with my conduct, and how much I enjoyed of her honorable esteem.

Thus become the object of the beneficence of so great a Sovereign, I could not think of leaving her Court. Still, notwithstanding all her goodness, and although I likewise had to boast of the good-will of my superiors, and of the friendship of several persons of distinction; notwithstanding I lived in the bosom of my family, with a father and mother universally respected, whose affections were all my own, and which my heart returned; yet, after all, it was with great difficulty I restrained the eager wish of my soul to go and throw myself at the

feet of my foster-sister; and this desire made me uneasy while any thing appeared to smile around me.

The death of the Empress-Queen overwhelmed me with grief, and was followed by that of several persons highly deserving of my veneration as well as of my gratitude; at length, not only my pension, but that of my mother also, were both alike involved in the reform which the new administration carried into execution.—I was, however, well aware that Joseph II. trusted to the generous heart of MARIA-ANTOINETTA to make our losses up to us. The distressing nature of my grief, the necessity of improving my circumstances, the duty which I owed my parents, the pressing intreaties of my friends, all combined to strengthen that sort of natural inclination which I felt to go to France, were it to be only for a few months. I decided at once upon my plan, and, while I was meditating upon the means of putting it into execution, an opportunity offered itself at one of the grand entertainments given at Vienna, in honour of the birth of the Dauphin of France, the first son of Louis XVI, who died a few years after, from the effects of inoculation, at the chateau of Meudon.

The reader may here expect to find several pages filled with slight incidents, but they are such as will give authenticity to my narrative. It consists of circumſtances which caused me to be an eye-witness of the French Revolution, and most of which serve to manifest the Queen's goodness.

The public feast I have just mentioned, and which was one of the most magnificent entertainments ever seen in Germany, was given by his Excellency M. the Baron de Breteuil, who, while at the Imperial Court, acquitted himself with so much propriety as representative of the greatness and dignity of the French Monarch.

The Ambaſſador had ordered it to be announced, that all those who were desirous of having tickets should send an account of their names, quality, and places of abode, to the secretary of the embassy's office. I requested four tickets for the Queen's nurse, her husband, and her children. My mother was agreeably surprised by the receipt of a most obliging letter from the Baron de Breteuil, containing an invitation in form, and acquainting her, that he had ordered to be reserved for her a table of twelve covers,

and that she was at liberty to fill up the other places as she should think proper. Highly sensible of a distinction so flattering to us all, we went together a few days after the entertainment to pay our acknowledgments. I spoke for the rest, and concluded my address of thanks, by expressing to M. the Ambassador the irresistible desire I felt to make a journey to Versailles; I begged his protection to aid me in carrying my design into execution. He assured me of it in the most unreserved manner, and was profuse in his kind expressions to my parents, speaking to them of the Queen in the same strain of admiration and affection as they themselves always did—then turning to me, he said, "As for you, my dear Weber, endeavour to "obtain leave of absence from the Emperor, "and I take upon myself to provide for you "when you come to France."

This permission, so necessary to be first obtained from the Emperor, was a matter of some difficult accomplishment. I at first spoke only of three month's leave. The Prince de Kaunitz and the Count de Blumegen interceded for me. At length I carried with me to the Baron de Bretuil a decree, containing the Emperor's permission to pass three months in France.

The Ambassador sat down immediately to his writing-desk, and wrote, while I was present, two letters, one to the Abbé de Vermont, reader to the Queen, and the other to M. Genet, at the head of the interpreter's office in the foreign department; these he put into my hands, unsealed, with the following words—" Do you yourself " read, Sir, what I have this moment written on " your account," and he requested me to go to the secretary's office to seal and direct them myself. I know not how more kindness could be added to so much courteous attention.

The Prince de Kaunitz also gave me a letter for the Count de Merie; Madame, the Countess de Brandeis, put into my hands one for her august pupil, MARIA-ANTOINETTA; and on the 16th of October, 1782, I threw myself at the feet of the Queen in the palace of La Muette.

No sooner was she informed of my arrival than she granted me an audience: the instant she saw me, she exclaimed, with an artless kindness of expression, " Good day to you, my fos- " ter-brother." She then talked of my mother, with very great tenderness, and of my whole family; and after many questions about Vienna, " We shall meet again," said she; " and I am

" very glad of it, I assure you, for it gives me " pleasure to see you have a wish to settle in " France. We will try what can be done for " you; but the first thing to be thought of is, to " reimburse your parents in the expences they " have been at for your journey—this I shall " take care of."

In fact, a few days after, the Queen caused to be remitted to me, through the hands of Madame Thibault, the first lady of the bedchamber, a hundred and thirty *louis*, to be sent to my mother. She had already asked the King to give me a situation in the department of finance, and he had promised he would.

I could not accept this situation without the formal consent of the Emperor, who did not like his servants to quit his service. My father opened the business by observing, that I wished to have my leave of absence extended—this he mentioned with a degree of discomposure. The Emperor, however, reassured him with these words: " My dear Weber, I very much approve " of your son's conduct, and should have had " but an indifferent opinion of him, if he could " be where he is, and not desire to stay longer " than three months. He has my leave to stop

" six." Then by degrees, and supported by the two ministers who had countenanced my first wish, my father ventured to prefer his request. I obtained, in short, a decree, by which the Emperor gave me permission, not only to resign my employment in the Chancery at Vienna, but even to accept for life a situation in France.

Elated with joy, I set out to bear this decree to the Court of my august benefactress. There I constantly passed my time in the pleasantest manner, in the society of those who were employed nearest her person; the Abbé de Vermont, her reader; the worthy Madame Thibault, first lady of the bed-chamber, and through whose hands she distributed her bounteous alms; Madame Campar, who held the same rank in survivorship of the Baroness de Mizeri, and who was no less distinguished by the comprehensive powers and graces of her mind, than by the amiable qualifications of her heart; this lady's father in law, M. Campar, her Majesty's librarian, a man of large fortune, of an amiable disposition, and fond of pleasure, to whom the Queen more than once said, with a good-natured pleasantry, " Pray take care and do not spoil " my Weber." When I first came to Versailles the " German dialect of her foster-brother" was

subject of much mirth at her Majesty's toilet, whenever he attempted to converse in French; his sentimental sincerity had the same effect, for he did not attempt to restrain his feelings in that country of refinement and elegant vivacity. All the time that I was in expectation of my leave of absence, which was to determine my residence in France, my mind was in continual agitation, nor did I endeavor to conceal it in the smallest degree. Sometimes, I even felt myself disposed to doubt, whether my parents would consent to my leaving them; and frequently used to observe, with much simplicity, " Ah, ladies, did you but know how " dear their Joseph is to my father and mother! " No, I dare say they will not part with him, " even to the Queen." These words were afterwards reported to her Majesty, as were the various testimonies I gave of my lively attachment to her; the effect which a word from her lips had upon my heart, the tears that stood in my eyes, whenever her name was mentioned to me; all these things were most faithfully reported to her, for there was no one about her person who did not wish to serve me. Whence it happened, that when I presented to her my letter of leave, accompanied with another letter,

written by my parents, in which they humbly professed their gratitude, the Queen said to me with a smile, " Tell your father and mother that " they have my thanks, for so readily parting " with their dear Joseph; and assure them, " moreover, the Queen will make such provi- " sion for her foster-brother, that they shall have " no reason to be sorry you are here." Then assuming a graver tone, and expressing herself in a manner that filled me with the highest veneration, " Weber," said she, " conduct your- " self with propriety, and I will be answerable " for your advancement. But remember, you " are not a Frenchman, and I ought not to af- " ford my patronage to any foreigner whose " personal merit does not justify it, especially to " one who may be said to belong to me. You " must, therefore, shew yourself superior to all " others, and make it appear that your merit " lays claim to preferment; do this, and you " shall not want my countenance. The place " in which you are about to begin your official " career, I have understood will be as good as " a thousand crowns a year to you, positive sa- " lary, without mentioning perquisites. For a " beginning, I think you may be very well satis- " fied."

I was more than satisfied; I was happy.—Among the words I have just penned there are two or three which I prize above all the treasures the world can boast—*you who belong to me:* how entirely! even to the very last drop of my blood, *did I belong to her*; and why was it not my lot to shed it for her security!

Meanwhile the place I had received, being in the Comptroller General's Office, fixed me at Paris; but, by my own intreaties, and the united interest of my friends, I at length got my situation changed for one that made it neceſſary for me to reside at Versailles. Here, situated immediately in the presence as it were of the chief object of my grateful regard, and among those friends, whose reception of me on my first arrival from Vienna was so sincere and gratifying, I was able to dedicate all the leisure my occupation left me to the most fervent wish of my soul, that of being almost every day in the Queen's apartments, of meeting her continually, of receiving her orders, and of conversing with her in the company of her most favoured servants.

She had deigned to make me known to the King, who, as well as herself, thought highly of

me for having given up my residence at Paris, in order to live in the little town of Versailles. If this really could be thought a sacrifice, I found my reward most ample. Never did the Queen perceive me in her suite of apartments, on the parade, at the theatre, at play, at a review, or at the rendezvous of the chase, without giving me some tokens of her notice, and most commonly by speaking to me in a very gracious manner. I had constantly a seat reserved for me at three principal tables of her household. Did any foreigner, and especially a German of distinction, arrive at the Court, the Queen always ordered me to be sent for: on these occasions, she, who had only to order me to obey her summons, condescended even to speak favourably of what she was pleased to call "*my complaisance*;" *she requested me to do the honors of Versailles and Trianon when any of our countrymen came thither**. "*Go pay my sister a visit*," said she to me, as

* The Prince of Paar, grand-master of the Austrian posts.

The Count of Esterhazy, his Majesty the Emperor's ambassador at the Court of Naples.

The Count of Wallenstein, his Majesty's chamberlain.

The Count of Thies, chamberlain and chief banker to his Majesty.

The Counts of Tellekey, chamberlains to his Majesty, and M. de Weghely, first lieutenant of the noble Hungarian

soon as the Archdutchess Christina, and her amiable consort, his Grace the Duke Albert of Saxe Teschen, arrived at Versailles, to set an example of that union of sentiment and virtue in which their souls were mingled. Often, whether at Fontainebleau or at St. Germain, when the King had given up shooting for the day, I was permitted to go out; and not unfrequently, when exulting at the quantity of game I brought home, and still more delighted at an opportunity of shewing my respect, I had the honor of laying at their Majesty's feet the first thrushes or woodcocks of the season, they would say, " Weber, we thank you for the " fruits of your success. The birds you sent us " yesterday were excellent; believe me your " *crapauds volans* * are great treats for Monsieur, " they will supply him with this evening's re- " gale." Not a single word of these conde-

guard, and who obligingly commissioned himself with the delivery of 130 *louis* to my parents, given to them by the Queen, under the appellation of reimbursement of my travelling expences.

* A sort of bird of the night, about the size of a turtle-dove, its plumage like the woodcock, and of the form of the large martin. *Catesby*, in his Natural History, calls it also *tette-cheore*, *goat-milker*.

scending speeches have I forgotten, and the voice with which they were uttered even at this moment vibrates on my ears. My gratitude, not my vanity, urges me to repeat them here. I seek not to display any personal merit of my own, but their kind condescension.

One day, during the entertainments given to the King of Sweden, and while the Royal Family were acting plays at Trianon, the Queen, to whom the keeper of the palace presented a list of the spectators, saw my name among those persons for whom the household box was set apart. She erased it, and with her own hand put it down for the foremost part of the set, among the Lords of the Court. Some time after, she honored me so much as to permit me to be present at her concerts, held at the Dutchess of Polignac's house. Thus distinguished, I felt a thousand times happier than riches could ever have made me; yet many persons expressed their astonishment at seeing me so satisfied with the moderate income of my situation, and wondered much that I did not importune the Queen for a better. But so long as she continued to receive me at her Court, so long as she deigned to appear gratified with my loyal respect, I felt no other wish. My salary, however, was dou-

bled two years after; an advance, unsolicited on my part; and such was my store of happiness, that I looked upon myself as a rich man. A grant was also attached to this increase, to furnish a house with; this I never made use of, nor did I trouble myself even to enquire what became of it. The Abbé Vermont, who was my mentor, applauded my caution, assuring me that the time would come when I should experience all its good effects. And many persons spoke the more highly of my modesty, because it gave them reason to be perfectly at ease with respect to any competition they might have otherwise apprehended from me. In fact, I knew there were, in the palace-household of the Queen, fourteen families, whose necessities were far greater than my own, and who had a much superior claim to her Majesty's beneficence; besides, I was aware that there were also many French gentlemen who, with my income, would have thought themselves rich.

I remember, that, when the Queen was ill, in a journey from Fontainebleau, in consequence of a miscarriage, much was said to her about the anxious distress I shewed for her health; perhaps it was anxiety for which there was not very great cause, but it was what my heart felt, and her Majesty was well con-

vinced I was sincere. One morning, when, as usual, I had enquired in her apartments how she had passed the night, the door of her chamber happened to be open; she perceived me, and flying towards me, with the most angelic benevolence, "Well, Weber," said she, "here "I am, look at me, convince yourself I am not "dying." What place, what fortune in the world, would I not have given up, for so precious, so delightful an assurance!

Thus did I pass five years of my life, from 1782 to 1787, when the French Revolution first began.

Every day I beheld some new virtue in the Queen, and felt that I more and more venerated, admired, and, if I may be allowed the expression, loved her; for, notwithstanding the vast distance of relative condition, I was attached to her, from my infancy, by a sympathy of the soul, which, although it may be little understood, by the greater part of modern high life, is acknowledged by every heart alive to the sweet and impressive influence of nature*, and blended my

* I would remind my readers of the high consideration in which nurses were held among the Greeks, Romans, and Gauls; and of that general principle of *foster-connection* among the aborigines of Hibernia and Albania; how indisso-

earliest ideas with an attachment, which the many recent sacrilegious violations of her fame have kindled into enthusiasm.

During the whole of these five years, I beheld the Queen pursuing her beneficent career, not only at the two interesting periods of her confinement, which she particularly hallowed by her charity, but in her common course of life; nor did she select her objects merely from the lower and more indigent ranks, but from those also of a higher class in society, who were struggling with misfortune. I have myself witnessed her bounteous distributions, among all denominations of persons, of every age, and of both sexes; one deserving person she would settle in a comfortable retreat from the world; another she would enable to retrieve the dignity of his

luble was the tie, how enthusiastic the attachment, that bound to the cause of their princes and chiefs, the children of those nurses by whom they had been suckled.

> Tu quoque littoribus nostris, Æneïa nutrix,
> Æternum moriens nomen Caïeta dedisti.
>
> And thou, O matron of immortal fame,
> Here dying, to the shore hast left thy name;
> Cajeta, still the place is called from thee,
> The nurse of great Æneas' infancy.
>
> Æn. b. vii. v. 1, 2.

ancestors; maternal feeling, conjugal affection, filial piety, and fraternal love, all by turns interested her concern. I have seen her also give support to whole families, portion young women in marriage, and educate children; even the audience she so readily granted to all, was in itself a benefit; so promptly did she meet the views, so willingly did she listen to the reasons, so anxiously did she always endeavor to bring about the success of the applicant, or to lessen disappointment by some consolatory compensation, whenever such success was opposed by obstacles not easily to be overcome.

I have seen the compassion of this unwearied benefactress of her people, passing even the boundary of Europe to free the wretched from their misery. In the year 1785, three hundred and seventeen captives, at Algiers, owed their liberty to the joint beneficence of the sister Queens of France and Naples.

Nor did the generous MARIA-ANTOINETTA ever know a difference between an enemy, or one of her own subjects, when called on to dry the tear of grief, or to prevent unmerited disaster; to restore a brother to a sister's hope, or to give back a son to a mother's embrace. When

Washington, that he might observe a principle of retaliation, which though most cruel was yet deemed indispensable, had with regret, but with inflexibility, passed sentence upon the young and brave Asgill, the Count de Vergennes made his appeal for mercy in the name of the mother of the Dauphin of France, and prevailed over the genius of war and policy, in behalf of the mother of Asgill.

I have also witnessed the Queen, while anxious to increase the glory of the King, and full of the tenderest wishes to have him universally beloved, ascribe to him, as to whom they were alone due, those acknowledgments which, through the means he had put into her possession, had been paid to herself. I have both seen and heard her speak with affectionate exultation of the peace he gave to the world, and of the numerous blessings which he heaped upon his people. My eye watched her amiable solicitude for his Majesty's success when he set out for Normandy in 1786 *; and I beheld the joy with which her heart overflowed, when this good Prince wrote to her an account of the pro-

* During the route, the King gaily observed: "*The Queen* "*has enjoined me to make my voice as soft as I can when I* "*speak.*"

fuse testimonies of affection that he met with wherever he went; I saw her transports also, when he returned to her arms, enraptured with his country's love. Ah! if at that instant an angel from above (for no human foresight could have effected it) had foretold to me that in three years' time a revolution would take place, I should then have myself predicted that affectionate support which MARIA-ANTOINETTA rendered to Louis XVI. amid all his dreadful sufferings.

How often too have I seen her Majesty, when yet in the early day of youth, turn from its impetuous pleasures, and dissipated delights, by first substituting, for the brilliant balls of Versailles, the rural assemblies of Trianon, which were ever producing some new mark of her goodness; from which time it was every day more and more evident, how her attention was taken up with the cares and duties of a mother. Sometimes, unaccompanied by her attendants, she would walk with her children in her gardens, the decorations of which she had converted into mediums of charity*; sometimes, in

* As appears from those twelve rustic habitations, which were built at Trianon by the Queen's orders, and in which she settled twelve poor families, taking upon herself to pro-

her own apartments, either mingling in their infant sports, or busily employing herself in needle-work. And, as the mind of Madame Royale gradually expanded, I have beheld her Royal Mother indefatigable in her efforts to implant and cultivate, in her tender breast, all those eminently good qualities which graced her own; and especially enforcing, with all her influence, a regard for every virtuous qualification, recollection of services performed, love of human nature, compassion for the unfortunate, moderation in high estate, charity, kindness, and forbearance. Truth is the guide of my words, and many a proof exists to corroborate the faithfulness of this description; but the fruits which this day grace the world, are of themselves sufficient to mark the excellence of the culture;

vide them with constant maintenance. Here, Misfortune found a refuge, and Charity chose her seat; here, in those very gardens, which base and ignorant calumny to this day dares to represent as the theatre of the most licentious scenes! such indeed as are to be read of in loose romances, and which the infamous plagiarist has obtruded upon the world as facts of history. We will not so outrage the memory of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, as to enter into farther vindication of her from such offensive falshoods, while the publications that propagate them can reflect disgrace on none but him who writes, and him who reads, and on the government that connives at such miserable productions.

and truly one would almost suppose, that the august and suffering mother of the Dutchess of Angoulême was led, by a secret dictate of Providence, to store the breast of her daughter with every peculiar virtue that her future situation might require.

With the same principle of action, and, alas! fondly looking forward to a happier lot for her children, did she once order them into her presence to receive the Baillie de Suffren, when he was presented upon his return from his glorious command in the Indian Seas. "My children," said she, "and you, Monsieur," addressing herself particularly to the Dauphin, "I introduce to "you M. de Suffren; we are all under great "obligations to him; observe him well, and re- "member his name; for it is a name which all "my children must learn to pronounce, and "never forget *."

I have seen the Queen put her children into the hands of the partner of her heart, enjoying

* The Duke of Angoulême, who was at this time only nine years of age, was reading in his apartment when M. de Suffren was announced: "Sir," said he, "I was perusing the "lives of illustrious men; but it is with pleasure I throw "aside the book to receive one so eminently great."

at one and the same time, in all their luxury, those purest sentiments of the soul, conjugal and maternal love, which, with their mutual and happiest influence, afforded her the sweetest intercourse of her life, and which became the King's most endearing relaxation from his toils. Particular days and hours were set apart, when, surrounded by a small select society of friends, they were wont to say, with Henry IV. "It is no "longer the King, or the Queen, we are now "ourselves; on one side of us our children, on "the other our friends."

Yet this conduct has been wrested into an abdication of royalty, and represented as one of the principal causes of the French Revolution. How wretched then must be the lot of those who are born to a throne! How steeled ought to be their hearts against those feelings which operate as the common ties of human nature! It is thus Philosophy exclaims, in the following striking passage:

Amitié, don du Ciel, plaisir des grandes âmes,
Amitié que les Rois, ces illustres ingrats,
Sont assez malheureux pour ne connoître pas.

Friendship, best gift of Heav'n, whose pleasing glow,
None but the truly noble soul can know,

Denied to kings, and all such thankless great,
Whose ignorance of thee makes up the curse of state.

But if Kings, urged by their grateful feelings, should shew themselves disposed to rank among the *truly noble*, instead of the *thankless great*; if they should appear to think this *pleasing glow* exists for them as well as others, that policy which Oriental pomp alone enforces, condemns the principle as tending to degrade the rank supreme, and to break through the indispensable bond of social subordination. Men therefore so vilify their natural claims as to judge themselves unworthy of the elevated friendship of Kings! But what a sentiment is this! how strongly marking an insensible and servile soul! how perfectly consistent with a narrow mind! Was Henry IV. assassinated, because for fifteen years he called Sully his friend? Was not that insurrection, in the height of which Louis XVI. gave to the worthy M. Turgot the same appellation, extinguished before three days were elapsed?

If, amid the sad circumstances which implicated the fate of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, we look towards those persons who became the objects of her favor, either in consequence of their own merit, or the generous bounty of their

royal benefactress, we shall perceive, that in no one instance did she meet with perfidious return. Courtiers there were, who forsook her when their gratitude was called upon; but those who really were her *friends* continued so; and by their faithful adherence to her cause gave ample testimony to her worth. The Princess of Lamballe, who had departed out of France, was induced to return by the dangers with which she saw the Queen on all sides encompassed—she returned to die for her! The Dutchess of Polignac, who was a pattern of every pleasing and amiable virtue, whom not even the wicked arbiters of her cause had hated, but that she was the friend of the Queen; even this just woman submitted to the taunts of slander, the plunder of confiscation, the miseries of banishment, for the sake of her royal mistress; and all these miseries chiefly arose from the conviction of those fearful disasters which she was prevented from sharing with her Queen; not a word, not a complaint, fell from her lips but for her; at length, yielding to the sorrow with which the loss of her overwhelmed her mind, and ignorant of the fatal stroke that cut short an existence on which her own depended, she joined her in death. I shall shortly have to relate an event relative to the Duke of Polignac, by which it

will be seen that he was no less attached to the Royal Family's interests, than was his distressed wife. And among those who were honored with the particular regards of the throne, and admitted into the select circle of its associates, there has existed but one sentiment in the breasts of all, from the commencement of the Revolution to the present day ; that of precipitating themselves into the same abyss in which those exalted personages perished, whose prosperity they had rejoiced in, whose splendor they had shared, could their own fall have lessened the danger, or prevented the destruction, of those to whom they were and ever must be devoted. The Marquise of Ossun, mistress of the Queen's wardrobe, and her greatest favorite, perished on the scaffold. The Princess of Chimay, seventeen years her Majesty's maid of honour, during which she graced her situation by her virtues; the Dutchess of Fitzjames ; the Dutchess of Maillé ; the Princess of Tarento, and others, whom under present circumstances it might be imprudent to name, all of them equally enjoying the Queen's particular favour, miraculously escaped the fury of the times, and by the help of disguises alone were able to make their way out of France. And who shall presume to doubt that the Countess of Dillon, whose personal

charms, great as they were, her pre-eminent goodness surpassed, whom MARIA-ANTOINETTA ranked among her principal friends, and with whom premature death lost all its terrors in the consolation of once again beholding the Queen, although that once was the last moment of her mortal existence; who, I say, shall presume to suppose, that had she lived to the period of the Revolution, she would not have preserved, with equal fortitude and ardour, the faithful sentiments of her soul towards her illustrious friend, thus deeply plunged in wretchedness? No—I proclaim it as the suggestion of my duty, I declare it as the conviction of my heart, and as the delight of my recollection, that of all those who were about the Queen's person, whether belonging to the circle of her friends, or to the most favoured part of her household; whether of what was called the *Palace*, or the *Royal Chamber*, MARIA-ANTOINETTA, to the last moment, found the heart of every one, I will not say faithful, that were too poor a term, but devoted to her service; at all times regardless of individual safety, whenever called upon, to preserve her from any threatening peril, to execute her commands, or to fulfil her wishes.

Be it also here remarked, that before the Revolution no one was ever permitted, in the presence of Louis XVI. to assume any familiarity of manner, that might in the least trespass upon that profound respect always due to the regal character. He would not himself have brooked it, and every one who has once approached him, knows how strongly the consciousness of personal dignity was impressed upon his mind. And as to the Queen, whoever would have pourtrayed majesty in all its splendour, or sovereign goodness in all its charms; whoever would have formed a perfect idea, in order to give a perfect description of the true assemblage of grandeur of soul, and personal grace, the pleasing yet awe-striking union of those two prevailing influences, splendid rank, and transcendant beauty, I would ask such an one, whether aught more was required to form a faithful portraiture of the whole, than to contemplate the figure of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, either in full court, or when crossing the gallery with all her train of attendants, to go to chapel, or even when alone with her children, where all her dignified excellence shone forth in its native lustre. At this moment, while about to depict her as the victim of a system, whose constituent principles were injustice, calumny, outrage, and tor-

ture, my mind's eye dwells upon the form she presented to my view, and my memory recals the agitation of my breast, when I first beheld her at Versailles, in the high character of Queen, receiving the universal homage of France. In vain should I attempt to give an adequate description of the conflicting emotions that shake my soul, while it traces the broad contrast; I am, therefore, induced to transcribe a passage, from a writer, whose mind the same comparison had inspired twelve years ago; a man, whose genius seemed to have framed for his expression a language peculiar to himself, but whose bosom felt not that within it which possesses mine:

"It is now," said the immortal Burke, in 1790, "sixteen or eighteen years since I saw the "Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at "Versailles; and surely never lighted on this "orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a "more delightful vision—I saw her just above "the horizon, decorating and cheering the ele- "vated sphere she just began to move in—glit- "tering like the morning star, full of life, and "splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! "And what an heart must I have, to contemplate "without emotion that elevation and fall!— "Little did I dream, that when she added titles

" of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant,
" respectful love, she should ever be obliged
" to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace
" concealed in that bosom; little did I dream
" that I should have lived to see such disasters
" fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in
" a nation of men of honour, and of cavaliers.
" I thought ten thousand swords must have
" leaped from their scabbards, to avenge even a
" look that threatened her with insult. But the
" age of chivalry is gone—that of sophisters,
" œconomists, and calculators has succeeded;
" and the glory of Europe is extinguished for
" ever. Never, never more, shall we behold
" that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that
" proud submission, that dignified obedience,
" that subordination of the heart, which kept
" alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an
" exalted freedom. The unbought grace of
" life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse
" of manly sentiment, and heroic enterprize, is
" gone! It is gone, that sensibility of princi-
" ple, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain
" like a wound, which inspired courage whilst
" it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled what-
" ever it touched, and under which vice itself
" lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness."

CHAPTER II.

Immediate Causes, and remote Sources, of the French Revolution—Louis XIV.—The Regency—Louis XV.—Louis XVI.—Convocation of the States General in 1789.

THE French Revolution has been of such prodigious extent, and protracted so long, so complicated also in its events and characters; so many passions, at once dangerous aud generous, base and terrible, have displayed their enthusiasm or frenzy, sometimes counteracting and sometimes promoting each other's effect, that thirty writers might, from speculative or metaphysical notions, ascribe each a different cause for the shock which the world has received, and every one support his argument with plausibility.

The truth is, there are so many causes to be alledged, that it may be easily observed, "with-

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" out this or that the Revolution had not taken " place;" but there exists no single cause to which the Revolution can be exclusively attributed.

I have watched the events with all the minuteness my comprehension would permit; I have read every thing printed on the subject; I have looked carefully over many manuscripts, from which I have been permitted to collect intelligence; and as I always seek the most simple positions whereon to rest my ideas, I discovered three primary and immediate causes of the Revolution: disorder in the finances; predisposition of the public mind; and the American war.

Had regularity been observed as it ought, in the management of the public treasury, had a constant balance been kept up between expenditure and revenue, all those ideas of independence with which the mind of the country was taken up, would have evaporated in private circles, or in the meetings of academic societies, or perhaps have passed off in a few parliamentary remonstrances; they would have probably given way to tranquil habits, and would have submitted to a reciprocal restraint; or they might have arranged themselves under a new

system of subordination in being directed towards public affairs, and by those new administrative bodies which were forming in every part of the kingdom, and remained under the immediate authority of the King.

Had the general temperament of the public mind been the same in the reign of Louis XVI. as it was under the government of Louis XIV. and even as far down as the middle of the reign of Louis XV. the derangement of the finances had not brought on any political convulsion. The deficiency in the treasury might have been supplied by measures more or less prompt, as the occasion required; suppression of salaries might have been enacted; investigations, more or less strict, instituted; some men in office might then have been alarmed, and perhaps punished; but no one would have thought of planning an insurrection against the authority and throne of the Monarch.

And, after all, if in this combination of circumstances there had been no American war; if, in the national debt, no such sum as sixteen hundred millions had appeared, the minds of the people would not have been hurried away

from theories of pacific independence, to the convulsive fury, and mad excess, of practical revolt.

To have prevented the Revolution, therefore, one of the three following steps was necessary: a better arrangement of the finances; a command over the general disposition of the country; or to have left the American insurgents to themselves. One of these causes of overthrow avoided, would have rendered the other two of no effect: but so contrary was the event, that all three were made to operate together with the most active efficiency. A Leopold, a Frederic, a Gustavus, would perhaps have devised means to have triumphed over them; but Louis XVI. was born to be the father of an obedient people, not the subjugator of rebellious subjects. Heaven, that destined him to be an awful example, had, in its wisdom, strengthened his heart with the magnanimous constancy of martyrs, rather than with the decisive boldness of heroes; with the confiding purity of angels, more than with the suspicious sagacity of mortals, and in the crisis into which he was thrown, no one else could supply the decision, action, character of the Master.

This is a consideration which, however painful to add, must not be withheld. The personal character of the ill-fated Louis XVI, the virtues of his heart, but little calculated for the peculiar exigencies of the times, constituted so material a source, whence the Revolution deduced its success, that I may with much propriety regard this as a fourth, and principal cause, in addition to the three I have already pointed out. Except these, in my opinion, every other circumstance, or individual agency, co-operated as secondary causes.—Consequences inevitably followed; and the knowledge of names that they implicated is altogether a matter of indifference—if one agent had not stepped forward, another would. Indeed it must ever be expected, that when in any powerful State the sources of the public treasury are exhausted, the constituent principles of society confounded, the ancient restraints of gradual subordination broken through, and no firm hand found to supply others at the instant; vice, passion, and even virtuous principle, will communicate in one common ferment, and produce events whose effects can neither be regulated nor foreseen. At such a crisis it is, that men, rigidly just in

themselves, will endeavour to take advantage of the circumstances of the moment to introduce, throughout every public medium, the most rigorous justice; while others, who have not minds to distinguish, or are resolved to banish such justice, will at one time be seen waging open war against its dictates, and at another, as their occasions suit, will appear to espouse its cause, in order to conceal their crimes under the sanction of its authority. On one side enthusiasts will start up, the purity of whose designs will itself render them dangerous; and in opposition to these will be found beings so corrupt in heart, as to become the willing promoters of public disaster, merely that they may seize on some casual occurrence to further their own interest. Here, we shall perceive young men ever aiming at innovation, intoxicated with self-presumption, and regarding the experience of ages with contemptuous concern. There, we shall behold men, advanced in years, shackled with the yoke of custom, and allowing no systems to approach so near perfection, as those which have for ever passed away. While other persons will come forward, who, considering themselves placed between these two periods of hu-

man existence, some by the intelligence of their minds, and some by their time of life,-and aiming at reconciling the passed, the present, and the future, with the common good, will conciliate the minds of none, and displease all: in the meantime, there will every where be seen the ambitious many, who grasp at popular celebrity, power, or wealth, laying hold, some with discrimination, others without any scruple, on the different means of gratifying their insatiable appetites. And amid all this confusion of characters, already so formidable, malcontents of every description, the vindictive, the envious, and the ungrateful, will obtrude themselves. At first, they will be found to consist principally of those classes of men, whom rank, fortune, or education, have raised above the common level. Each of these separate bodies will exert their utmost efforts to rouze that mass of society, which may be justly styled the savage multitude, in order to interest some part of it in a peculiar interest, against a rival power. This mass, when once put in action, overthrows all without distinction, men and measures, opponents and counsels, enemies and chiefs; all are confounded in one general destruction. And, as in a continued

tempest, wave breaks on wave, so, in a revolution, parties are continually rising and destroying each other; crimes are excited by crimes, and the one becomes the means to punish the other's violations; till at length, disorder falling into lassitude, some man steps forth, daring enough to seize the power at the head of a band of armed satellites: artful enough to persuade all parties that he will serve them, and powerful enough by the splendor of his victories to secure the army. Intoxicated with power, he soon overleaps all the bounds of justice; the idea of repose associated with that of his government, which at first had been his ægis, will cease to protect him; public hatred will oppress his life, the torments of fear will poison his existence, and history will pursue him after death. In the end a wise man, one ambitious of more solid glory, supported by the opinion of the army and of the great bodies of the State, will restore the nation, the territory, and the army to the heir of the ancient dynasty, and woes will be remembered only to be lamented in the mournful commemoration of their dreadful epochaes. Such was the picture of Great Britain a hundred and fifty years ago.

Such is the outline of the French Revolution, and indeed of every revolution that shall henceforth arise out of similar circumstances, and be grounded on like principles. We will now go back to the consideration of those events which I have denominated the principal causes of this dreadful convulsion.

In the first mention that I have made of these, I have classed them according to the extent and active power of their influence; deeming it proper to place finances first, because in the present day, the existence and fall of States depend alike upon their finances. But, as various facts will now enter into our discussion, it will be necessary to adhere to chronological arrangement. The state of the public mind, at the time of the accession of Louis XVI. is the first object which demands our attention; this will require us to take a succinct view of periods anterior to it; for it is highly necessary to mark whence this particular state of public opinion took its rise, how it unfolded itself, to what extent it spread, and by what means it arrived at that degree of prevalence, which during the reign of the just and unfortunate Louis XVI. was every where observable.

1. General state of the public mind.

To assert that every century of our modern history has been characterised by some ruling influence; to remark that, after the age of crusades was gone by, there appeared successively those of chivalry; of the revival of letters and religious sects; of learned accomplishments, magnificence, refinement of manners, and the fine arts; and that, lastly, came that of scientific accuracy, philosophy, freedom of inquiry, and independence of principle, is to declare a truth well known to all.

To load with undistinguishing execration the spirit of the century recently terminated, to revile the name of philosophy because the devastators of France have chosen to call themselves philosophers, were to be as rash as it would be to blaspheme the sacred character of Religion, because the assassins of St. Bartholomew brandished a sword in one hand, while they carried a crucifix in the other.

The more just, reasonable, and salutary principle of action is, to honour true philosophy, because she is the decided adversary of false; to tear from the face of the guilty and the sense-

less wretch the mask with which the one seeks to hide his wickedness, and the other his folly; to encourage the study of the laws of nature, which always direct the mind to the contemplation of their great Creator, and to inculcate a regard for those of society, which always tend to the preservation of peace; to block up every avenue of sedition, by opening the mind to reflection; to discriminate between the use and abuse of every principle, which, although good in itself, may have a fatal tendency when wrongly applied; and, above all, to keep for ever before the conviction of all men, how necessary are the regulating restrictions of moderation in all their conduct, to guard against excesses of every kind, because every excess not only brings along with it evils of its own, but those also of the contrary extreme which it opposes.

Cardinal Richelieu.

I have heard many Frenchmen, in these latter times, talk a great deal about Cardinal Richelieu, regretting, above all things, the loss of a genius like his, and expressing a wish that they were able to bring back his spirit from the other world; and yet I have read, in a Memoir addressed to the late Count de Merci, by one of the most intelligent among the deputies of the noblesse, who attended at the last convocation of

the States General of France, that the Cardinal was the person who took the first step that led to the Revolution of 1789, and perhaps might be considered as the first author of it. "This "man," said the Memoir, "by reducing the no- "blesse to a mere shadow, deprived its order of "all power to defend itself or to protect the "throne. This man it was, who, by sowing the "seeds of rebellion in Scotland, and by keeping "in pay, throughout the British isles, those very "Presbyterians whom he had driven out of "France, furnished, in the murder of Charles I. "a model, of which that of Louis XVI. was, "as the Bishop of St. David observed, an *am-* "*plified imitation.*".

What warning then, can ever reach the minds of men who are not led to reflection, when they have before them the example of a minister, on the one hand, who, in stretching the springs of absolute power to the utmost, was really doing no more than laying the foundation of that division and distraction, to which their country, after a short interval of two reigns, became the victim; and, on the other, have been the living witnesses of an unbridled licentiousness, the partizans of which, for the last ten years, have shocked the world with continual convulsions, for no other

purpose than to put that country under a military government, and subject it to a permanent martial law*.

I shall not here stop to repeat what is so generally known respecting the first of these two reigns, in which the ministers, Cardinal Richelieu and Loménie, held divided sway. There are few persons who are not well acquainted with the principal circumstances that characterized the life, the government, and the age of Louis XIV. The turbulence of public affairs in his minority, the exploits of his youth, his forty years of glory, the ten of disastrous reverse, and, after all, the return of victory to his standard, at the moment that he was about to close his eyes in death, are all of them events well known to the world. Nor is it necessary for me here to draw the contrast between the greatness of his soul, and the infirmities of his nature; the virtues of his heart, and the aberrations of his ambition; his intoxication in prosperous affairs, and his fortitude in reverses; his gallantry and his religious scruples; his salutary establishments, and his odious proscriptions; his legal ordinances, and

Louis XIV.

* Perhaps necessary, but the necessity lessens not the misfortune.

his military persecutions; in a word, it would be superfluous to relate all the extraordinary occurrences of his reign, the impoverishment of his subjects, and idolatry of his Court; the rage of his victims, the admiration and respect, the envy, fear, and hatred, with which he was regarded by all the powers of Europe.

My present aim is, to trace the progress of the public mind, amid the varied display of power, and vicissitude of fortune; to note, throughout a reign which is generally instanced as remarkable for the unlimited power of the crown, and the uniform submission of the people, the first appearance of those early germs of independent spirit, which soon after arrived at their full growth of formidable effect; and, finally, by investigating the springs of action, to evince with how much truth Voltaire, when speaking of his countrymen, observed—" The English " have also supplied us with Philosophy."

Within the seventy-two years during which the sceptre of France remained in the hands of Louis XIV. only, England was governed by four Kings, and in an interregnum by a Protector: this country was the scene of two revolutions, one which the English denominate the *fanatic*, the

other the *wise* one. The first drenched the throne in blood, and suspended the monarchy for thirteen years; the second changed the order of succession, and for ever fixed the extent and limits of the royal power in Great Britain.

The French may be said to have been directly concerned in these important events, not only in consequence of the contiguity of the two countries, but of the constant and close intercourse kept up between them. The widow of Charles I. daughter of Henry IV. took refuge in her native country with her two sons, one of whom was destined to replace his family on the throne, and the other to be the cause of its never ascending it again. The latter, twenty-eight years after the Restoration, returned to France to seek there an asylum, protection, and retreat. And there it was, that these illustrious personages, by their presence alone, and still more by their speeches, their manifestos, their enterprizes, their successes, and failures, kept the public mind continually fixed upon the great contest which subsisted in England for more than a century between the prerogative of the crown, and the rights of the people.

Those who were only spectators, there found sufficient subject for reflection; the restless and factious sought to regulate their conduct by the example of their neighbours. When we perceive the Parliament of Paris, during the troubles excited by the Fronde party, which opposed the Court, forcing the Queen Regent to fly from the capital, and to wander from province to province with the young King, who was then a minor; when we behold this assembly of lawyers appointing generals, levying troops, all at once establishing a tax and a military conscription, and in short declaring every thing that belonged to the Court-party to be lawful plunder, at the same time seizing upon the King's private purse to enable them to wage war against him. When these things meet our view, what do we see in the *Assembled Chambers of Paris*, but a weak imitation of the two Houses of Parliament assembled at Westminster? For what difference is there between the commission of Lord High Admiral, given to the Earl of Warwick in 1642, by the two Houses of the Long Parliament, and that of General in Chief, with which, in 1649, the Duke of Bouillon was invested by the Grand Chamber of the Parisian Parliament; between the *City Militia* of London, embodied by an act of the former, and the *Cavalry of the Great Gates*,

raised by an *arret* of the latter? Or what in effect does the plunder of the *delinquents* to the amount of an hundred thousand pounds sterling, on the one side, differ from that confiscation of the property of the courtiers, which amounted to twelve hundred thousand *livres tournois*, on the other?

The difference, notwithstanding the equivocal sense of the word, was that which subsisted between a Parliament of Judges, who, holding their office by the authority of the King, dared to take up arms against him; and a National Parliament, that, calling itself the sacred deposit of all the rights of the English people, pretended to defend them against the abuses of regal power. It was such a difference as distinguished the vanity of Counsellor *Quatre-sous*, who contented himself with having purchased with his situation the privilege of calling the great Condé a *Faquin**, from the profound sagacity of the Deputy Pym, who warned the noble-minded Strafford, the day on which he declared for the King, that he would pursue him till he brought him to the scaffold; in which he was as good as his word.

* An unprincipled fellow.

In matters of this sort, it is of great importance to check the first beginnings. The British House of Commons was not always so powerful as it became in the reign of the unhappy Charles I.; the arrest of several of its members, in the time of Elizabeth, did not produce the least commotion in London; although the forcible seizure of the Counseller Broussel caused all Paris to rise. Louis XIV. when scarcely of age, and having already made one campaign, hastened to put a stop to the very first efforts of civil disturbances, and all these parliamentary pretensions at once; lest, from being at first only ridiculous in themselves, they might in time become formidable to others. He was no more than seventeen years of age, and had but a few days before come from the trenches at Stenay, to the chateau at Vincennes; when, one morning, as he was getting ready for the chase, he learned that the Chambers of Parliament had met for the purpose of passing a vote of censure on some of his edicts: he repaired instantly to the palace, and, without changing his dress, booted, and with his whip in his hand, entered the Grand Chamber, where he was not at all expected, and addressed the members in the following concise speech, which was not forgotten during the

whole of his reign: "The disasters your assem-
" blies have brought upon the kingdom are
" already well known; I command that the pre-
" sent, called together to censure my edicts, be
" dissolved. Mr. President, I forbid you to suf-
" fer these assemblies to be continued, or any of
" you members to desire it."

So determined a speech, it was necessary he should justify by his actions; this he soon did, in the most ample manner. He dazzled the nation by the splendour of his glorious achievements, taught it to exult in his power, charmed it by his splendid entertainments, regulated it by his laws, and enriched it by his marine. About the same time the three British kingdoms recalled Charles II. to the throne of his ill-fated father; he was received at Dover by twenty thousand of his subjects on their knees, and shedding tears of joy. This triumph of royalty chased away all those novel ideas, which the English, by their civil war, and short-lived republic, had created in the minds of some of their neighbours.

These ideas were revived in France when the dethroned James II. retreated thither; and received greater strength from the peculiar kind

of controversy which he kept up, at a distance, with his revolted subjects, as well as from those fruitless attempts which the Monarch, who had granted him protection, made in his favour. It was then that Louis XIV. was unhappy: he had been unjust; men of an intolerant spirit had rendered him cruel, or rather had themselves been so under the sanction of his authority, by concealing their abuse of it from his knowledge; for it is certain that Louis was deceived throughout the whole of this odious war, waged against opinions and consciences. Notwithstanding that five hundred thousand Frenchmen were driven by it out of their native country, for no other crime than their religion, and one million of their brethren remained in France under the rod of persecution. Notwithstanding children were torn from the breasts of their mothers; women violated in the arms of their husbands; the ministers of the church hung up on gibbets, or seen expiring in the flames; while whole families, and even communities, were exterminated by a ferocious soldiery. Enormities which filled all Europe with outcry and imprecation; so horrid was the abuse of sovereign power. And, if the spirit of resentment did not shew itself so openly on the very theatre of all this injustice, it was not less deeply rooted, although

it was more restrained. I have seen many things that were then written, by the victims in their exile, and many of the productions of their priests. Independence, revolt, and hatred, could not have used a more violent language; nor was there one of these philippics that was not clandestinely circulated in France, not only among the protestant congregations, but among the discontented of every state and faith, whose number was very considerable. A treasury totally exhausted, the consequence of protracted wars, and fictitious expences; a debt of nearly three milliards of livres; excessive imposts, and a series of years in which the receipts were four fifths less than the expenditure; loans, by which the King received eight millions, and acknowledged a debt of thirty-two; and, finally, to make up the long catalogue of disastrous circumstances, nature added her rigours, and the scourge of famine augmented the terrors of bankruptcy, and the miseries of indigence; this concourse of calamities soon substituted impatience of oppression, for the extravagant submission of idolatrous veneration. It is a melancholy truth to record, that, in spite of the heroic manner in which Louis the Great died, his funeral rites were insulted by the testimonies of public joy.

Louis XV. Regency. It has been said of the Regent who governed France, during the minority of Louis XV. that "he would have been the father of the state if "he had not found debts to liquidate, and "wounds to heal." It ought to be added, "and "particularly if the unworthy objects of his "confidence, had not inflicted a deeper wound "in the morals of the country."

It is too true that this Prince, possessing in himself every virtuous qualification that could lay claim to the highest respect, admiration, and affection of Frenchmen, seemed destined to become the prey of corrupt minds. A wretched fatality deprived him of five governors, who, each in his turn, directed those eminent gifts which Heaven had bestowed on the nephew of Louis XIV. to the promotion of the glory and happiness of France *. Of the two tutors that

* The first of these was S. Laurent, and the first, perhaps, in capacity, although he was not so in titled dignity. The next was the Duke of Navailles, who died in 1684; after him came Marshal D'Estrades, in 1686; to him succeeded the Duke of Vieuville, in 1689; and, lastly, the Marquis D'Arcy, in 1694, who is more to be regretted than all the rest, because he possessed the confidence of his pupil, who admired his manners, respected his virtues, honoured his memory, and forgot his lessons.

remained to him, one * had already given proof how worthy he was of having so excellent a disposition to cultivate; but the other † shewed himself much more capable of perverting its purity; and thus the evil principle counteracted the good. The Duke of Orleans was humane, frank, generous, heroically brave, as good a soldier as an officer, and of an extensive erudition, which a rare judgment matured and perfected; yet, he suffered all these excellent qualities to be obscured by a double depravity of morals and mind, that corrupted both the Court and the city, and could not fail, sooner or later, to degrade the supreme authority; from this depravity also was produced the first instance of public outrage of religious principle. It was the Duke of Orleans who, after having made a numerous appointment of Bishops, said aloud, "Now it is to be hoped the "Jansenits will be content: I have bestowed all "the bishoprics upon grace, and not one upon "merit." That infamous preceptor, who ought to have been punished as a criminal, for having corrupted his august and excellent pupil, was most profusely remunerated for his services; a procedure, the scandal of which rose in degree with his promotion; first, he was made one of the

* The Abbé Mongault. † Du Bois.

Privy Council, then Ambassador to England; next, Archbishop of Cambray, for which, Du Bois, although a married man, took priest's orders immediately, commanding his wife to withdraw herself, and through the means of the Intendant of the Province, procuring the leaf, which contained his marriage, to be torn out of the parish register. Within the two following years the eyes of all Europe beheld Du Bois Archbishop and Duke of Cambray, Governor General of the Posts, Cardinal, and Prime Minister, and enjoying an income of upwards of sixty thousand pounds sterling. It was no uncommon thing to hear a man, who held the reins of government in the French empire, and a prelate invested with the Roman purple, mingling his conversation with oaths when he gave his audiences, and talking, in the palaces of Kings, to women of the greatest respectability, in the same strain as if he had been in his infamous parties, and speaking to the vile objects of his brutal gratifications. He also professed it, as his chief maxim of government, that he had no greater faith in the integrity of one sex than in the virtue of the other; and that, in his opinion, that man was the most honest who best knew how to conceal his knavery. Those noble and virtuous characters, Noailles, d'Aguesseau, and S. Simon, whom the

King had called to his councils just before he died, or the Regent had made choice of immediately after, were driven from the Cabinet, by the son of a village apothecary, to whom his master himself gave the name of *Coquin*, when he took him for his minister; and to such an extravagant pitch was this degrading partiality carried, that this *Coquin* became a member of the *Council of Conscience*, and was absolutely endeavouring to get himself made Patriarch of France, when a shameful disease, the consequence of his debaucheries, put an end to his life. The man, who was at once his master in the Cabinet, and his pupil in vice, soon followed him; sincerely, but too late, repenting that he had suffered a wretch, whom he had uniformly despised, to gain such ascendancy over his mind; one too, whom he had discovered to be as monstrous in his ingratitude as he was in his other vices, having actually laid a plan to get his too blind protector discarded from the councils of the King as soon as he should be of age to sit on the throne.

Notwithstanding all this prostitution of supreme power, and all those excesses to which it gave birth, no commotions had yet proceeded to so great a length as to grow into sedition,

during the eight years of the regency. The firm principles of the government, under Louis XIV. were too well grounded, and had continued too long to be done away in so short a time. The vigorous activity which had been given to all the springs of power, had preserved their force of action, thus far, beyond the existence of the first projector; besides, among all classes of people, whether possessing much or little property, that absurd scheme, *the System*, as it was called, engaged the thoughts of every one, filling the public mind with as ardent a thirst for gain, as it has since felt for freedom, to the total exclusion of every other idea. When this business was brought to a final issue, those whom it had enriched kept within bounds the discontent of those whom it had ruined; and the general mind, thus compressed by one sordid pursuit, lost all that elastic principle which gives it those sudden impulses of the most impetuous passions. But, in fact, the great affabtlity of the Duke of Orleans, which in justice we must not pass over, not only supported him to the last in the people's favour, but caused him to be esteemed, by persons of the first rank and character, as well for the generous complacency with which he listened to the severest animadversions on his conduct, as for those returning evidences of his naturally good

disposition, when, after having lavished his generous attentions upon the vicious, he would unexpectedly be seen paying the due tribute of honourable regard to the more deserving, or outwardly acquitting himself of those solemn duties of a religion, that but the night before he had made the scoff of his revelry. Every body felt disposed to think well of him, for the tender and noble-minded interest which he never failed to take in the welfare of the young Prince, who stood between him and the throne. The tears that fell from his eyes, when, reading the *Philippics of La Grange*, he came to that abominable passage in which he was accused of a crime his heart abhorred the thought of, sufficiently shewed his sensibility, although he so capriciously strove to hide it. Those tears, however, did not escape the respectful notice, and affectionate witness, of the people at large. And again, the dexterity with which he completely frustrated the conspiracy of *Cellamare*, the instant he had intimation of it; the clemency he displayed on an occasion, that *Richelieu* would have made a pretext for shedding torrents of blood; the readiness with which he forgot the injury done to himself, fully satisfied as he was with having preserved France from total overthrow. In short, at all times, and amid his most disorderly practices, his

amiable manners, his brilliant wit, and his engaging condescension, endeared him more or less to all who came into his presence. It was, however, impossible to feel any sentiment for him, that was not mixed with some other of a contrary nature; no person could love or blame him without regret; and whenever a complaint was heard, it was generally more for than against his interest; whence it was, that the general indignation, produced by the confidence which he put in so desperate a minister, was considerably lessened by the satisfaction every body experienced, in having that opportunity afforded them of imputing all his vices to the suggestions of another, and ascribing all his virtues to the natural bias of his own mind: an impression, this, which we do not at all wonder at finding deeply fixed in the hearts of all who had once seen him; for we, ourselves, are at this moment sensible of the same, after having investigated all the separate traits of his mental character, and all the various contradictions of his personal conduct.

But we shall, nevertheless, attend strictly to that line of conduct which the duty of an historian dictates, and proceed to trace the general consequences of such an influence. We shall

not less openly declare, however reluctantly we may do it, that the Regency, and the Society of *Roués*, libertines, as they called themselves, left behind them a leaven of corruption, which spread its infection throughout one whole class of society, and in its consequences threatened to involve every other part of it.

This dissoluteness of demeanour had nothing to do with that principle of gallantry, which, in the early part of the preceding reign, studiously shunned publicity, by its delicacy doing away much of its shame, and which the people, from their attachment to the throne, alternately lamented and overlooked, as a frailty the most excusable of all those to which human nature was liable, and the most easily expiated by consequent regret. No; it was, on the contrary, a cynical pursuit of shameless pleasures, blended with an audacious contempt for all those restraints which had hitherto commanded respect from all minds. It was a combination of sensual appetite and perverted understanding, without the least qualifying sentiment, or illusion of the heart, which gives to gratification all its zest. It was a co-operation of every debauched and impious principle of action, by which the voice

of conscience was stifled, the public opinion insulted, and the seeds of contagious anarchy sown in the most exalted ranks of society.

While we are thus tracing the progress of political principles, we must not omit to note the admiration with which the Duke of Orleans, from his youth, regarded the English constitution; his passionate fondness for freedom, public or individual*; his rooted hatred of letters *de cachet*, which, notwithstanding they were had recourse to during his administration, and he himself signed them, he never approved of; neither must we pass over, unobserved, the advantage England knew so well how to take of such a disposition; the address with which she brought over the Abbé Dubois to persuade his master, that he stood in need of her assistance to defend himself from the intrigues of the Spanish cabinet; from the same influence, also, proceeded that indifference, or, as others have called it, that insensibility, with which France beheld the grandsons of Henry IV. nearly deprived of their throne; those treaties which the Regent made with George I.; those alliances of pleasure, as well as of policy,

* S. Simon says, he used to talk of it in a *voluptuous* strain of panegyric.

which he entered into with Lord Stair, Lord Stanhope, and other enthusiastic partisans of the last English Revolution; and, finally, the different means of communication, which would necessarily bring the respective subjects of the two countries into the same habits of intercourse as subsisted between the principal persons of the two governments. Perhaps we ought, indeed, to go as far back as the first part of the Regency, in order to make some remarks upon that peremptory and abrupt manner in which the will of Louis XIV. was set aside, instead of having undergone some respectful modifications; that right of remonstrating against the laws, before registering them, which it was necessary to put again into the hands of the Parliament in the agreement made with it; that habit which this body was allowed to fall into of making void the wills of Kings, with less ceremony than those of the citizens of Paris; and, lastly, the idea it must have of its power, being permitted to use it in so unlimited a manner, and the temptations to which that idea must continually expose it. Who, after having well considered all these circumstances, will hesitate a moment to conclude that this mixture of good and evil dispositions, of important and trifling occurrences, tended, in

the end, to make considerable innovations upon the old principles of government, and the ancient manners of the French monarchy?

Many writers have affected to trace the limit between those innovations, which justice and reason alike demanded, and those which both equally rejected. Without entering into any detail, we shall generally allow that there certainly ought to be some distinctions made. Doubtless, when *the Parliament of Paris carried its insolent proceedings so far, as to strip the Regent of all his authority, in order to invest itself with it*, when this assembly *followed up its favourite purpose of changing its condition, as a simple court of justice, into that of an English House of Commons, keeping the Upper House in awe**; it did not then become merely the right of the Regent, but it was also his duty to *put a stop to that attempt*; and the Duke de St. Simon, whose words I have borrowed, had good grounds for accusing the Regent "*of long* "*delays, and tedious forbearance.*" But, when this same Parliament of Paris remonstrated so strongly against the subversion of property; when it was desirous of opposing a barrier to that

* Memoirs of St. Simon.

sweeping madness of *Law* which was about to reduce to beggary five hundred and eleven thousand fathers of families, there certainly could not have been imagined a more legitimate use of the authority, with which this court of justice had just been re-invested; and when we behold these remonstrances punished by the disgrace of such a man as the Chancellor D'Aguesseau, and by the unheard-of arbitrary exile of all the Magistrates at once, we ought not to feel surprised that, from that period, some people were heard to call for the convocation of the States-General.

Cardinal Fleury.

The wise, pure, and peaceable administration of Cardinal Fleury; the presence of a King, the last remaining branch of the numerous offspring of Louis XIV, whose youth, so full of promise, had been preceded by an infancy of precarious growth, checked the progress of the recently received opinions; or perhaps it was the novelty of the moment which effected it; it was a Prelate who was religious, a Minister who professed a regard for public decency, a Court of economical conduct, a Queen, whose virtues were imbibed in the school of misfortune, and a Prince who, while he cultivated morality, proved that

he was jealous of public esteem; a line of conduct which Louis XV. rigidly observed at the commencement of his reign.

Montesquieu. In the mean while Montesquieu, whose genius procured him the appellation of the legislator of nations, went over to England, *to learn to think*, and brought back that admirable chapter on the British Constitution, which formed a sect in France, and was rewarded with a gold medal struck in London. Voltaire. Voltaire, born to exercise that superior influence over the minds of the century, which was unknown before he appeared, had preceded Montesquieu two years in a visit to the same country: he brought back with him his tragedy of Brutus, his character of Orosmanes, his preface to Mr. Fawkner, his grateful sense of the favours that had been heaped upon him, and his admiration of the laws he had seen administered. Till then, there was room to think, that neither of these two celebrated men had done more than borrowed from their neighbours what increased the valuable possessions of their native country. Voltaire boasted, all his life, of having been the first person who introduced to the knowledge and study of his countrymen, those great ge-

niusses, and profound philosophers, who were the glory of England.

Thanks had been due to him, had he contented himself with naturalizing Shakespeare in France, that poet who invokes in the "Eternal Mover "of the Heavens, his hope, his stay, and his "guide*;" or Bacon, who declares, that "a "little philosophy withdraws the mind from re- "ligious reflections, but a great store brings it "back again;" or Newton, who was the greatest genius that ever lived, and always bowed low whenever he heard the name of GOD pronounced; or even Locke, notwithstanding the peculiar nature of some of the subjects, which he discussed in a very free manner, even this man Voltaire might have been thanked for introducing to his countrymen; for, throughout his life, he was as much the friend of order as he proved himself to be that of liberty; Locke, who died no less a Christian than a philosopher, and might have well been considered as belonging to the whole human race, whose cause he pleaded. Bourdaloue, this man's co-

* O thou Eternal Mover of the Heavens.——
GOD shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide, and lanthorn to my feet.

temporary, made use of the same expression as he did, and even addressed it to Louis XIV. in the chapel at Versailles—*Kings were made for the people, and not the people for Kings*; a maxim which Massillon repeated to the young Louis XV. with the following addition—*We gave you your crown.* Bossuet and Fenelon used a language still more unrestrained.

But, unfortunately for France, the country that boasted of a Shakespeare, a Bacon, a Locke, and a Newton, was the country of such men as Tyndal, Woolaston, Toland, Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke, whose poisons were carefully culled by Voltaire, and given to France in the form of his *Philosophical Letters.* About the end of the last century, the thinking mind was at a loss to divine whence could arise the madness of Boyle, who, after having described the abuses of philosophy, with an energy of which few men were capable *, promoted them with still greater ef-

* Philosophy resembles those corrosive powders, which, after having taken off the morbid excrescencies of a wound, eat into the quick, turn the bones carious, and penetrate even into the marrow. Philosophy, at first, refutes errors, but it stops not here, it goes on to attack truth, and proceeds so far that she wanders out of her knowledge, and nothing is found to check her career. BOYLE, *Art. Acosta.*

feet by his perfidious scepticism. Montesquieu was guilty of an insanity still more extraordinary, for he did not even veil his contradictory sentiments with the appearance of doubt; extolling Christianity in the highest terms in his *Spirit of Laws*, and ridiculing it in the lowest in his *Persian Letters*; which latter work gave, as it were, the signal for all the multiplied attacks since made on religion, with a determined violence, as destructive in its consequences as it was unjustifiable in its motive. The sentiment of St. Evremond must be allowed to contain a larger portion of true philosophy, when he said, thirty years before this mischievous æra, *the respect which I owe to my fellow-citizens, would alone teach me that which I owe to religion.*

Certain it is, however, that at this time innovation brought in a number of new opinions, which were obtruded on the public mind not always in the same open manner, nor was the progress they made always alike rapid, but they were never inactive. The war of 1740, in which was undertaken the bold enterprize of Prince Charles Edward, in Scotland, made the quarrels of Kings and people again the subject of general attention. The various plans, instructions, and manifestos, drawn up by the united efforts of

the Cardinal de Tencin, the Marquis d'Argenson, the Duke de Richelieu, and some others, who all espoused the cause of this Prince, were constructed upon the principle of that mutual contract, and reciprocal engagement, which ought to subsist between sovereigns and their subjects. When Charles Edward, after having gained some most extraordinary victories, was forced at last to yield to numbers, it was not an uncommon thing to meet, in France, with persons who seemed to entertain ideas which could scarcely be reconciled to each other. The heroism of this illustrious unfortunate Prince was admired, and his ill-success lamented—yet, at the same time, that resolution met with general approbation with which a nation determined not to receive a sovereign from the hands of foreign influence after having chosen one for itself. At this period it was, that the Marquis D'Argenson, whom we have just now mentioned, wrote his *Considerations on Government*, a book replete with wise and pure sentiments, but novel in their nature, and in some instances rather of hazardous tendency. In conjunction with him, the Count D'Argenson, his brother, seized every opportunity of opposing all approach to despotic power, in the private audiences which he had with the King on business; a very singular cir-

cumstance certainly, but reflecting equal honour upon both the Monarch and his servant. At this juncture, also, the famous Jean Jacques Rousseau surprised the world by his productions in the triple course of literature, philosophy, and politics; a man who carried every thing into extremes, and was continually contradicting himself, possessing a mind as anxious in its search after truth as it was absurdly attached to paradoxical conclusions; he was also master of a style that never fails to charm, even when made the vehicle of matter at which the heart revolts, and he succeeded in exciting a fanatic spirit of sedition, as readily as others have inspired a like enthusiastic extravagance of impiety.

1750. J. J. Rousseau.

In the mean time the King, who, while sick at Metz, received those exalted demonstrations of his people's love, which grief and joy alternately called forth, and which attached to his royal title the affectionate apellation of Well-beloved; the King, who had conquered in person at Fontenoy, and had in person taken Courtray, Menin, Ypres, Kenocq, Furnes, Fribourg, Tournay, Louvain, Malines, Kier, Arscott, Anvers; he who had put an end to this most glorious war, by as liberal a peace, and had consecrated the

first years of national repose by founding a school for young warriors, contiguous to the asylum already established for well-tried veterans; such a Sovereign seemed formed to restrain, within its due bounds, if not altogether to suppress, the general propensity to innovation. Unfortunately however, courtiers of the most depraved practice, had sunk his soul in degeneracy, and plunged it into excesses which were the more dangerous, as being totally devoid of every sentiment of delicacy. Notwithstanding, in justice to this much-calumniated Monarch, be it observed, that the corrupt crew by which he was surrounded, long strove in vain, with all their arts, to triumph over his innocence, and to subdue that rigid respect, which, in the early part of his reign, he preserved for conjugal fidelity. Perhaps, it may be added, that if the Queen, by her unnecessary austerity of manners, had not given strength to their seductions, she had retained full possession of the King's affections, which it cost his vicious advisers so much pains to alienate; at least, those gratifications to which Louis XV. at first gave himself up, would not have brought disgrace in their train. The females who were, in their turns, the objects of these licentious attachments, loved the Prince for his own sake, and extenuated their errors by proving

themselves not lost to shame; public affairs they never interfered in, but conſtantly directed the mind of their royal master to the contemplation of the happier satisfaction of enjoying his people's regard, and urged him on continually to the purſuit of that true glory to which his heart was naturally alive. On a ſudden there ſucceeded to theſe a woman, who vainly boaſted of what others blushed at; whoſe mind was enſlaved to riches and to power; who aſpired at the direction of the miniſtry, and the diſpoſal of the army, aſſuming to herſelf thoſe honourable diſtinctions which even ſupreme power could not have given her a title to, without breaking through the eſtabliſhed laws of the country; and who, in ſhort, while ſhe was able to gratify her thirſt for abſolute rule, but lightly regarded involving the Prince and government in contumelious blame. It was not long before ſhe reigned paramount, and every where confuſion enſued. The clergy were at war among themſelves, and in oppoſition to the magiſtracy—which, in its turn, ſet its face againſt the church and the throne. The Cabinet became divided; the Parliaments formed confederacies, deviſed the ſyſtem of *claſſes*, and called themſelves the twelve diviſions of one Parliament that conſti-

tuted the representative body of the nation. This step the King endeavoured to prevent; but their pride, offended by the restraint attempted to be put upon their pretentions, no longer set any bounds to their insolent declarations. The resolutions of the Court began to operate as excitements to revolt; when, at length, the brain of a madman kindled amid these parliamentary firebrands, and Louis XV. was assassinated.

War of 1756.

At this period a new war had just broken out abroad, the commencement of which was signalized in every quarter of the globe by brilliant conquests. Port Mahon taken by storm, by a kind of prodigy, and a naval victory obtained at the same time over Admiral Byng; the carrying of several forts, and some advantages obtained over the English squadrons in America and on the coasts of Africa and Coromandel, reflected the greatest lustre on the French arms by sea and land. A formidable coalition of the Empire, Russia, Austria, France and Sweden, menaced the King of Prussia; and the French soon deprived him of a powerful ally, the only ally Frederic had; they overcame the Engliſh army, and made it capitulate at Closter-seven. But scarcely were these advantages gained, when most of the Commanders to

whom they were due were changed, thwarted, or unaided. The command of his army was taken from the virtuous General who had gained the victory of Hasteinbeck; and he who had taken Vesel, Hesse, and the country of Hanover, who in a pitched battle had defeated the English, Hanoverians, and Hessians, commanded by that very Duke of Cumberland who had before experienced the superiority of the French arms at Fontenoy, the Mareschal d'Estrées was obliged to give up to a favoured rival the continuation and glory of the fine campaign which he had opened so brilliantly: the noble Montcalm was abandoned; having exhausted himself by his successes, he was overpowered by numbers, and seemed to enjoy in his heroic death a consolation in not surviving the loss of the fine colony of Canada, which all his valour and talents had not been able to save: the neglect of supporting the navy, and the impossibility of having squadrons in any part equal to those of England, rendered useless the firſt advantages gained in India; the siege of Madras was raised, and all the fortifications of Pondicheri, the place being surrendered at discretion, were destroyed: Martinico, Guadaloupe, and Acadia*, all fell at once; and as if these reverses had not been enough to cause irri-

* Nova Scotia.

tation, and spread disorder in a nation so full of enthusiasm and honour, dissentions among the Generals, and mutual accusations, brought forward trials, which were so many firebrands thrown into this furnace of discord.

To the immense losses of the French in the East and West Indies, and in their commerce, were added the shameful defeat at Rosbach, which suddenly changed the face of affairs; the loss of the battles of Minden and Crevelt; and, what was more felt than all the rest, the dispersion and defeat, without engagement, of the fine fleet under Mareschal de Conflans, destined to land troops on the shores of Great Britain: nor did the public, either in the capital or throughout the provinces, fail to impute such a succession of misfortunes to a want of conduct in the ministers.

With those ministers so justly censured, the Count d'Argenson, who possessed the talents of Louvois, but knew better how to render them valued and esteemed, ought not to be confounded. The evil genius of France had so ordered it that, at the commencement of a foreign war combined with inteſtine broils, d'Argenson was removed from the direction of the war depart-

ment, and Machaut lost his place when he was about to tranquillize the internal commotions. Both were disgraced contrary to the inclination, opinion, and interest of the Sovereign; but the Army and the Cabinet, and in short every thing, were at that time sacrificed by an unfortunate Court intrigue. The influence of the Favourite was stronger in the Cabinet than even in the Armies; she set up and pulled down continually whom she would; and it is a fact, hardly to be conceived poſſible at the present day, that France, during five years' war, had five Ministers of War and as many Ministers of Marine, four for Foreign Affairs, and the same number of Comptrollers-General of Finance.

India and America lost, the isle of Goree in the power of the English, the French marine utterly ruined in every part of the globe, fifty-six frigates, and thirty seven ships of the line, taken or destroyed by the English, were losses that were but feebly compensated for by a victory or two gained here and there in Germany. It is true Marshal Broglio, at Berghem and at Corbac, the Marquis of Castries, at Clostercamp, the Prince of Condé, at Joannesberg, covered themselves with glory, and supported the credit

of the French arms; while the Chevalier d'Assas, by himself alone, reflected honour upon France and human nature.

But all the fruit of these victories was to prevent some disasters, and to check the triumphant career of those heroes who reigned in Prussia and in Brunswick; and, in 1762, the struggle was prolonged by a contest for a post, or passage in Hanover, or in Hesse, when in 1759, the battle of Hasteinbeck, if Marshal d'Estrèes had been permitted to follow up his advantages, would have placed the whole of those countries at the mercy of France. That family compact, however, which at this time united all the sovereigns of the house of Bourbon, by a general alliance, offensive and defensive, was doubtless a masterly stroke of state policy, and added considerably to the reputation of the Duke de Choiseul's ministry. The publication of this treaty rekindled the almost extinguished embers of patriotism amid the general discomfiture of national concern. The capital, and the several provinces, the administrative and municipal bodies, the commercial companies and those of finance, the treasurers of the various departments, and the clergy in extraordinary assembly, all endeavoured to out-do each other in loyalty,

and presented the King with some very fine ships. But all these circumstances could not remedy the misfortunes of the moment. Spain, when delaying to sign the treaty, seemed but ill disposed to the general cause, but as soon as she had signed it became a generous ally; yet, such was her fortune, that she appeared to have engaged in the quarrel for no other purpose than to lose twelve ships of the line, the islands of Cuba and Manilla, besides a hundred millions of money. France, after having been engaged in a disastrous war, made an humiliating peace.

Louis XIV. when only ten years of age, having been informed of the victory gained at Lens by the great Condé, exclaimed—*The Parliament will be very sorry for it.* So Louis XV. when his dispatches brought him the unfortunate tidings of the war of 1756, might more than once have truly said, *The Parliament will be very well satisfied.* We allow, however, that there would be something severe, and indeed unjust, in bringing this accusation, at the present hour, against the whole of the French magistracy of those times. It is seldom the case that men form the criminal resolution to cause their country's disasters; nor do they entertain so culpable an idea as that of

of enjoying them when they happen. I have heard of a member of the Parliament of Dijon, who, in 1786, returning from Versailles, where, with many other deputies of the body to which he belonged, he had just gone through the degrading scene of that year, is reported to have said, when he got back to his own town, *A minority, and two battles lost, will reinstate us in our place.* The following day to that on which this sally fell from his indignant lips, this magistrate himself would have taken measures for securing the safety of the King, and the glory of his country. But it often happens, that without having any intention to be the authors of public calamity, persons find themselves so unfortunate as to be the promoters of it, by distracting the attention of government, by throwing various difficulties and obstacles in its way, by opposing supplies when the state stands in the greatest need of them, by taking months to deliberate when they have only a few days to act in, by spreading commotions at home when they are called upon to face the enemy from without; and although they do not absolutely rejoice at the afflictions of their country, they profess that it is necessary to profit by the circumstances of the moment, in order to *reinstate themselves* in what they call

their place. There is a principle of self-reference with which men view the weakness or the embarrassment, the shame or the pride, of those who, having been at the head of affairs, are of course considered as responsible for the success of measures. The illusive suggestions of this self-opiniated way of judging, lead them to conclude that, had they shared in the administration, no miscarriage had occurred: and an ambitious thirst for power urges them on to the declaration, that they are called upon to repair or to avenge it. At first, such unauthorised pretensions meet but with little opposition. On one side, an audacious impetuosity, subtlety, and fanaticism; on the other, apprehension, improvidence, and immorality, come to a reciprocal accommodation of claim, by agreeing upon each others victims. From among these, vanity selects such as it is gratified by the sacrifice of, and policy fixes on those whom it is convenient to give up, or even to destroy. And hence it occurs that, for a little while, those agreements of compromise obtain, by which a short-lived truce is purchased with lasting shame, or a deceitful calm is suffered to precede storms, that bring along with them the most ruinating consequences.

At length the dreadful day arrives, in which those, who have hitherto held their power by usurpation, resolve to seize it as a right, and those who have given up almost every thing are desirous of recovering what they ought never to have yielded. The Prince, whom all pretend to serve, perceives, in the meanwhile, that he has been deprived of his privileges by some, and betrayed by others. The signal is instantly given for a civil war, which always begins in imprudence, and is carried on amid the most terrible excesses. Not one of the conflicting parties knows how to temper its measures with wisdom or equity; each, without reflection, and without remorse, rushes into perpetrations which it denominates acts of justice, and which it conceives the injustice of its adversary to have rendered lawful. Among the contending powers one exalts itself above the rest, and becomes the general judge of all—public opinion; which, in losing every idea of respect, throws aside all habit of submission, lays itself open to the impressions of the moment, and alike permits itself to be misled by the hypocritical innovator, and exasperated by the honest but rash reformer. From that moment, nothing retains its proper situation—authority and subordination

are confounded; he who made the law has the law dictated to him; those who were wont to give sentence are themselves condemned; and in matters wherein the mind ought to tremble at the pernicious examples it has given to the world, it congratulates itself as having triumphed gloriously. But whenever institutions have been broken through, which it was universally supposed would only fall with the state itself, little else has been effected than to give the fullest force to the common idea that nothing can continue secure, and every thing must come to an end. The power, which one day thinks it has conquered, proves, by its fall the next, that there were those who could overthrow it in its turn.

The foregoing reflections present us with a true retrospect of the interior convulsions of France, ever since the rebellion of the Parliaments of Paris and Rouen, against the royal authority, in 1752 and 1756, to the abrogation of all the Parliaments of the kingdom, by the Chancellor Meaupou, in 1771.

The person who continued the work of the President Hénault, and who wrote under the immediate inspection of the censors of the press,

and, what is more, under the cognizance of the Parliament itself, endeavours to find palliating reasons for the conduct of that body during the seven years' war; and paints, in very strong colours, the unpropitious influence which such parliamentary insurrections had throughout the government; not only did they produce derangement of the finances, not only were they the cause of the lamentable issue of a war begun under the most auspicious circumstances, but, what is still more to be deplored, and what I shall express in the historian's own words, *they introduced among the people a spirit of restless insubordination and discontent, and a general relaxation of the restraining ties of the social contract**.

* The following is the whole passage:—After having successively remarked upon the bed of justice held by Louis XV. the 13th December, 1756, the system of discipline which this Prince himself brought into Parliament, the 180 presidents or judges throwing up their commissions immediately after, and disputing the right of the sovereign to receive them, the historian terminates his recital with this extraordinary conclusion: "If the step taken by the King surprised "the Parliament, that of the latter no less astonished the "King. This body did no more than conduct itself with "order and firmness, but the propositions of Paris were car- "ried. Thus, while Europe wore a very threatening aspect, "these civil dissentions, uniting with foreign attack, rendered "the situation of France most critical, and clogged the wheels

After the melancholy peace of 1762, the ministers who had the greatest influence in the council thought it necessary at any rate to conciliate the Parliament of Paris; but they were strangely mistaken as to the measures they thought proper to adopt to obtain that end. The regulation of the finances, and the destruction of the Jesuits were put into their hands; and the conduct of the commander in chief in India, and the delinquents in Canada were submitted to their decision. There was not one of these concessions that was not pregnant with ruin, as well to those by whom it was granted as to those by whom it was wrested, to indivi- Peace of 1762.

" of government, while they introduced among the people a " restless spirit of insubordination and discontent, tending at " the same time greatly to derange the finances of the coun- " try: and, relaxing the restraining ties of the social contract, " carried their influence even as far as the military operations. " In a vast empire, events are linked together by those " secret connections which escape the vulgar conception, and " are only recognized by more comprehensive understand- " ings; neither is it easy to calculate, how greatly intestine " division, and public mistrust, contributed at that time to the " unfortunate issue of a war, the commencement of which " had been so brilliant."

Chronological Abridgement of the History of France, 4th part, page 304.

duals and the public, to the monarch and the monarchy.

Laverdy. A Judge of considerable knowledge and modesty, of disinterested principles and estimable conduct, was taken from the bench of the Grand Chamber to be made a financier; in which capacity he displayed the very reverse of all these: he was permitted to form from among his late comagistrates, a chamber of finance, formed for the purpose of enforcing the execution of his proclamations. He thus procured all his edicts of supply to be registered in Parliament without any remonstrances, while the members succeeded in getting the reimbursement of their old contracts passed, and salaries were also attached to their new functions. But what the State gained by all this did not so clearly appear. This Administration individually or collectively, produced, firſt an order forbidding any person whatever to write, print, or publish, any remarks on the finances; secondly, an edict, called *the Edict of Discharge*, which was, however, nothing less than an augmentation, both of the debt and the impost; thirdly, a multitude of fiscal inventions, the very idea of which brought a blush into every honest man's cheek; fourthly, a dispute with

the province of Bretagne, as dangerous as it was disgraceful, in which the contempt of the various agreements, from time to time entered into, very much weakened the influence of all superior authority; fifthly, a confusion and perversion of measures on the important subject of the corn trade, which were so general and extensive that, in order to prevent insurrection, it was necessary to abolish this department of administration as speedily as possible, and to turn out the minister who was at the head of it. His successor was chosen, by the Duke de Choiseul, from that particular description of magistrates which the boards of council appointed for the government of the provinces; and the individual administration of the provinces prepared for the general administration of the kingdom.

Maïnon d'Invau.

The name of this person was D'Invau, a man in whom was combined integrity, moderation, and intelligence. After an office of finance, constituted like that which had been recently abolished, he foresaw the numerous obstacles that would arise from the opposition of particular persons, as well as from the difficulty in which affairs were involved; he looked narrowly into the condition of things, projected a plan of reform, established it by a decree, desired that

a new committee might be formed, consisting of ministers and members of Parliament, laid before them his designs, and frankly asked whether they would support him or not? The magistrates answered, no; and the ministers dared not say, yes.—D'Invau immediately gave up his place, and refused to retire upon a pension; because, as he said, he had done nothing. It was then again thought necessary to take a Comptroller-general of Finance from the Grand Chamber: the Duke de Choiseul and the Parliament concurred in choosing the Abbé Terray, who proved a principal instrument of that ruin, in which the Parliament and the Duke de Choiseul were similarly involved.

Abbé Terray.

Jesuits. The destruction of the Jesuits, that memorable instance of puerile oppression, of jealousy, ambition, injustice, and barbarity, for each of these prevailed in the act, gave to public education a wound which a whole century perhaps will not be able to heal. It freed the phalanx of Materialists from a body of opponents, which still made them tremble *. It remotely encouraged

* "These men die hard," said D'Alembert to one of his familiars, with whom he had been to hear the famous sermon preached by P. Beauregard, against the apostles of infidelity.

the formation of sanguinary clubs, by causing all religious and prudent congregations to withdraw themselves, in which the savage populace of *Faubourg St. Antony* was tamed by the disciples of an Ignatius and a Xavier. Such men as *Porée* and *La Rue*, *Vaniere* and *Jouvenci* in the academic chairs; *Bourdaloue*, *Cheminais*, *Neuville*, *L'Enfant*, in the pulpit; *Segaud*, *Duplessis*, and *Beauregard*, in the processions of the cross, in the public streets, and cross-ways, were perhaps alike necessary to secure tranquillity in this world, and happiness in the next. Voltaire himself wrote respectfully to Father Tournemine.

Frederick, so justly styled the Great, who yet yielded to human nature in some of its greatest foibles, sometimes appeared to be convinced of the dangerous principles of all these false philosophers, whose adulatory attentions he was weak enough to be pleased with. In one of these moments, in which his good sense retained the ascendancy over his self-love, when the news reached him of the proscription of the Jesuits in France, by the confidential agents of supreme authority—*Poor souls*, said he, *they have destroyed the foxes which defended them from the jaws of the wolves, and they do not perceive that they are about to be devoured.*

Whomsoever his Prussian Majesty meant by the wolves, it is well known that the same Parliament that devoured the Jesuits, in 1764, were equally disposed to devour the episcopal body in 1765. By its own authority it annulled the acts of the assembly of the clergy. At this time it was that so noble a step was taken by thirty-two Bishops, and as many members of the second order, who, representing the whole assembly of the clergy, went in deputation to Versailles, and addressed the King in a speech, the first sentence of which ran thus: *Sire, what upstart power is this, which presumes to establish itself so suddenly on the ruins both of the altar and the throne?* The King annulled the arret of the Parliament, which breathed the most rancorous vengeance. The quarrel spread with all its venom amid the various powers of the State, the spiritual and civil, royal and judiciary authorities; and every department was full of confusion and disorder.

Whenever the rights of the Monarchy and those of the different bodies of the State shall be disputed, it will always produce dangerous dissentions. For ten years France had resounded with the clamour every where occasioned by the

religious disputes. Jansenism and Molinism had had at Paris their staff-officers and their head-quarters. Here, Prelates ordered the sacraments to be refused to those who did not admit the bull *Unigenitus*; there, the Parliament, to punish the Prelates for refusing the usual assistance of the Church, deprived them of their temporalties; now the Princes of the Blood, and the Peers of the kingdom, were invited by the Magistrates to take seats in the Parliament; now the King forbade the Princes to vote in the Parliament of Paris on affairs, the cognizance of which he reserved for his Privy Council. These troubles had spread to almost every town throughout the kingdom. In vain did Louis XV. like a father anxious to part children exasperated against one another, impose silence on all; the Parliaments, constantly jealous of their authority, and pretending that the spiritual and civil jurisdiction could not be separated, as spiritual disputes necessarily drew after them state disputes, caused several mandements issued by Bishops to be burnt by the hand of the public executioner, and ceased attending to the administration of justice. On their part, the Bishops drew up new formularies, and one of them went so far as to declare those excommunicated who should read the decrees and remon-

strances of the Parliaments on the bull and other religious matters. The Parliaments were exiled; so was the Archbishop of Paris: and it was found necessary to hold a Bed of Justice, in which the King enjoined the Bishops and Curates moderation and discretion, and ordered that all the disputes should be buried in oblivion. An attempt being made on the life of the King during these transactions, by a fanatic whose imagination had been inflamed by the murmurs he had heard at public places, all the popular commotions on the subject of religion were absorbed in the general consternation caused by the crime. The misfortunes of war smothered without extinguishing these disputes. After the peace of 1763, the Indian Trial, and the circumstances attending it, spread indignation and terror throughout the army; the generals and provincial commanders saw all at once their zeal fettered, their safety shaken, and their dignity debased. In the course of these intestine dissentions, a bare narrative of which would fill several volumes, the Duke, afterwards Mareschal de Fitz-James, was ordered by the Parliament of Toulouse, and the Marquis Dumesnil by the Parliament of Grenoble, to be arrested; and the Duke d'Aiguillon was denounced by the *Procureur-General* of

the Parliament of Bretagne. All, even the Court of Aids, proud of the illustrious name of Lamoignon, and of the genius of Malesherbes, who were at their head, conceived the idea of requiring of the King *a severe punishment* of the Commanders who had executed his orders, and of denouncing to the nation the abuses of the Royal authority*. The King, at a loss how to act, went to the Parliament of Paris, and held the famous sitting of the 3d of March 1766, called *the flagellation.* Every thing hastened to a total disunion. The Magistracy of France was at open war with the King, the Church, and the army. In this state of trouble and confusion it was an extraordinary circumstance, that Louis XV. in his heart was often as much in opposition to his Ministry as to his Courts

* " And, moreover, that the said our Sovereign Lord the " King be implored, to grant to the whole body of magis- " tracy, the justice due to it for the *unheard-of violences* com- " mitted against several of the courts of his kingdom, and " to free his people from their apprehensions, who, being " witnesses of the excesses perpetrated against the magistrates, " *foresee too plainly what they have to expect*, if such abuses of " the military authority be not restrained and corrected *by* " *the severest punishment.*"

Registered Arret of the Court of Aids, upon the Edict and Declaration of 1764, *for the Discharge of the Debts of the State.*

of Justice; that one part of that Ministry were friendly to the Parliaments, while the other were hostile to them; and that the first President, Meaupou, put on the Chancellor's robe only for the destruction of the Parliament which he left, and the overthrow of the Ministry which he entered.

Revolution of the Parliaments.

This revolution, for such it was in the fullest sense of the word, was not long before it broke out. It was brought on by a series and complication of disorders, the bare mention of which is enough to have made any person of observation foresee all the miseries that threatened France; and we cannot pass them over without giving at least a sketch of them. The French themselves have forgotten the concatenation of those facts, and to other nations they were scarcely ever known.

Bretagne.

This province, which in the midst of a great empire had the appearance of being a small state by itself, preserving, in their full force, all its conventions, its representative assemblies, its right of framing its own taxation, and of making its own assessments; in a word, having the power of governing itself. This province, dis-

tinguished for the unmixed race, courage, patriotism, and union of its inhabitants, but not unfrequently disquieted by the effervescence of their passions, the rigid systems of their public economy, and their jealousy of their independence. This ancient Armorique, called in modern ages Bretagne, a country which, even in the most tranquil times, could not be governed but with difficulty, was for six years one great theatre of political insubordination, popular hatred, ecclesiastical, ministerial, judiciary, and fiscal intrigues, too numerous for any one to be able to particularize them.

These troubles, as far as they proceeded from the naturally restless spirits of the people, might easily have been calmed. But this unhappy country was heated by the passions of others, and was torn to pieces by interests, which, so far from participating in, it did not even suspect.

At first, having been divided both in public opinion, and in the private sentiments of individuals, with respect to the important subject of the Jesuits, it offered, between two parties that nearly balanced each other, a rallying point to all those individuals, who, dispersed in different parts of the kingdom, were desirous of

embracing, with activity, one opinion or the other.

And, moreover, having at the head of its government, and in its magistracy, men whom their names, their talents, and their professed aim had marked out for the first situations in the kingdom, it bore in its bosom, unknown to itself, the hidden springs of all the ambitious designs of the moment. Through its medium the respective parties were anxious to keep what they had, or to acquire more; to form connections, or to keep off competitors. On the same ground, they at different times endeavoured to rouze, to combat, to form, or to mislead the public opinion; to solicit, to discourage, or to force, as a matter of necessity, the choice of a leader; and it is a fact, that the opposite parties at Versailles contended with each other for the ministry, on that great theatre of the states, and within the bar of the Parliament of Rennes. Every one pursued his purpose according to his opportunities, his character, and his power. That zealous commandant, profound politician, and impetuous spirit, the Duke D'Aiguillon, had in view the welfare of the country, the reputation of government, the unrestrained sway of authority, and the complete riddance of every obstacle: it was

The Duke D'Aiguillon.

evident that the transports of gratitude, which he had met with, would soon be converted into expressions of hatred. The Comptroller-general Laverdy, with much aukwardness and unpolished manner, attempted at one time to interest the votes in his behalf, and at another to cavil upon the rights of the states—one year he was the auxiliary, and the next the persecutor of the Commandant. Such a man could meet with nothing but ridicule and contempt. The Duke de Choiseul, more noble in his principles, more sagacious in his calculations, more determinate in his decisions, and more persevering in his plans, inflamed the Bretons at a distance with the desire of preserving inviolate those rights which had been handed down to them by their forefathers. It was no difficult matter to perceive, that this man would succeed when it came to the trial. Last of all, the Procureur-general La Chalotais, eager to possess popularity, in order that he might arrive at power, enthusiastic in his friendships, violent in his hatreds, both of which he made a subject of interested concern, more than of sentiment; blending with these private principles the formidable powers of his public ministry, the oracle of a Parliament, which, consisting of the first nobility of the country, always

Laverdy.

The Duke de Choiseul.

La Chalotais.

acted in concert with, and never in opposition to the states; this man had it in his power to arm his ambition, or his vengeance, with the sword of justice; he could give a legal sanction to tumult, and make trifles appear of serious importance; the most vapid declamation, he could convert into the gravest denunciation, and, in a word, could assist the party that he chose to espouse, with the whole artillery of *decrees*, and *arrets*, which may be regarded as the *ultima ratio of Parliaments*, on the same principle as canons are the *ultima ratio of Kings*. The instant such a man took part in the dispute, it might well be expected that the whole province would be as immediately thrown into universal confusion.

In the year 1764, the first of these characters, whom I have just described, the commandant of Bretagne, a peer of France, grand-nephew of Cardinal Richelieu, nephew of the then minister, and finally the friend of the Jesuits, and in great favour with the Dauphin, was denounced in the Parliament of Bretagne, by the *Procureur-general*, just arrived from Versailles; this man, who was the ardent enemy of the *Society*, was also the devoted agent of the King's mistress, and of the

first minister, who were leagued together to bring about the destruction of that monastic order.

The principal grievance in this complaint of the *Procureur General* was founded upon an undertaking relative to the public roads, for which travellers have ever since heard the people of Bretagne extol the name of this Commandant. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the Parliament which, upon such a pretext, had filed an information against the representative of the Sovereign, should be ordered to Versailles to receive a severe reprimand. This body returned to Rennes, to declare, according to the custom recently adopted by these courts, that it no longer continued its functions. All the magistrates gave in their resignation together, and justice was no longer dispensed to the people of Bretagne.

On a sudden, seditious libels were seized; correspondences were intercepted; the handwriting of several anonymous letters was supposed to be recognised, that reflected upon, and even threatened, the Sovereign himself. It was pretended, that a plot of confederacy had been entered into by all the Parliaments against

the authority of the crown. The same *Procureur-general*, who had accused the Commissary of the King before the Parliament of Rennes, was himself impeached in the King's name before a commission of the Council. He was confined with his son, and three counsellors of the same Parliament.

This was just about the time when the Parliament of Paris was occupied in giving judgment upon the sieges and battles of India. It was looked upon as a mere trifle, that a *lettre de cachet* should have shut up for fifteen months, in the Bastile, this General and his staff, without granting them a trial. It was considered as of very small consequence, that two of the chambers of this Parliament should be converted into a court-martial, to pronounce on accusations as foreign in their nature, to their jurisdiction, as to the course of their studies. Yet this same Parliament could raise a violent outcry about two *Procureurs-general*, and three counsellors, being placed in a fortified castle, and denied the privilege of being tried by their Peers.

" Try them, then, yourselves," said Government to their colleagues, who had thus given in their resignations, " re-assume your functions,

" for their sake, for your own, and that of those " who are under your jurisdiction."

" No," answered these colleagues, " we will " not try them, neither will we try any one; " we have resigned, and persist in our resigna- " tion."

In consequence of this answer, another commission was established at Rennes, to supply the place of those who had withdrawn themselves from their public duties.

The former of these two commissions left Paris in haste, lest an arret of Parliament should be issued against them; the other resolved to do no more than empty the prisons of Rennes, thronged as they were in consequence of the long lapse of justiciary procedure. When these commissioners arrived there, they found two hundred and thirty-five prisoners, thrown into dark and infectious dungeons, and all, according to the custom of the country, chained to the floor by rings of iron fastened to a staple. At the expiration of five weeks, one hundred and sixteen of these poor wretches were tried, and only one executed. But the deputation persisted in de-

claring, that they were not authorised to decide in civil causes, or to try the confined magistrates.

A new Parliament of Bretagne, formed by the address of the Commandant, with part of the old one, declared itself without powers to judge its former colleagues. A fresh order was issued to the judges of the privy council, then at St. Malos, to draw up and decide definitively upon the trial in question. Again refusal was the result; but, that this body might not appear to reject the order absolutely, they drew up a few preliminary instructions, and then separated.— Thus the King was not able to find judges who would proceed against other judges accused of having offended his person, conspired against his authority, and set a part of his kingdom in a flame.

All the Parliaments of France; one after the other, took up the defence of the accused persons belonging to this one. All the classes also vied with each other, which should issue the strongest arrets, and make the most resolute remonstrances. Those, however, of Paris were the most remarkable. Intent upon adopting the system of lenity, with regard to the twelve Par-

liaments, this court reserved to itself the appellation of *The Mother Parliament*, and called the others the *Colonial* ones. It declared itself alone to be *the Court of Peers*, a title which it refused to the *Colonies* (for even these fast friends could not entirely hold together), and which the government recognised, in the hope of breaking the bond of unity. Under the sanction of this title, the cause of the Duke of Fitzjames had been removed from Thoulouse, and the design was conceived of removing that of the Duke D'Aiguillon in the same manner. The Parliament of Paris had opened proceedings upon the troubles of Bretagne.

At this moment Louis XV. exerted himself with much indignant and energetic resolve: he one morning came to this Parliament, in the midst of that famous sitting of the 3d of March, 1766, of which mention has already been made. He annulled the *innovations of the courts*, insisted that the expressions of *classes* and *unity* should be used no more, declared that *he held his crown from GOD alone*; and ordered the acts, which contained these decisions, to be registered *in his presence*. All the provincial Parliaments received orders to send a deputation with their registers, that the same declaration might be inscribed

in them; they all complied. The proceedings opened at Paris were removed, taken from the courts of that city, and sent back to the new Parliament of Bretagne: they were again removed to be laid before the grand council. The imprisoned magistrates were brought to the Bastile; the Duke D'Aiguillon kept possession of the states; that party of the ministry which supported the Parliaments, joined the ranks of the other that did not; every thing appeared to be brought to accommodation for a while, and the partisans of the parliamentary system had to lament that fifteen years' constant exertion and aggrandizement, in favour of these courts, were rendered fruitless in a single instant.

Bretagne seemed to constitute the main source of every renewal of these troubles. The King had put an end to the affair of the five magistrates by his royal letters patent, which stopped all proceedings against them: but at the same time that he declared *their honour was cleared*, he added, that he should not receive them again into his favour; and although he gave them their liberty, he sent them into exile. The Parliament of Paris was encouraged to give to the other courts the signal for fresh remonstrances; storms, of a very serious nature, seemed to threaten the

first states that should assemble in Bretagne.—The Duke D'Aiguillon had lost his main support in the person of the heir to the throne. The Duke de Choiseul was also become very powerful, in consequence of the death of the favourite. In 1767, *intermediate states* were assembled by a commissary of the King, instead of the commandant, and in another city in lieu of Rennes. In 1768, the Duke D'Aiguillon was ordered to resign his command. In 1769, the King was persuaded to grant to the States the restoration of their former Parliament. In 1770, the Parliament, thus recalled, took up again the very trials which the King himself had put a stop to; it declared that nothing could be proved against its members, and renewed the denunciation, made in 1764, against the former commandant, not even hesitating to bring against him a suspicion of having laid a plan to poison the two *Procureurs-general.* The Duke D'Aiguillon was upon the point of being declared under arrest, when an order arrived, from the King's own hand, to forbid the Parliament of Bretagne to carry its proceedings any farther. The magistrates of Rennes, being informed that letters patent were making out, to remove this business up to the Court of Paris, transmitted of their own accord every information to the

Mother Parliament of Paris, pressing the matter upon its attention. The letters of evocation were expedited, with no less promptitude, by Chancellor Maupeou, who remarked to the enemies of the Duke, *This measure will be his ruin*; while, on the other hand, he soothed his friends by saying, *It is the only means left to save him.* The Duke contented himself with requesting the King to permit justice to have its course.

The King declared his intention to preside, as first peer, in the preparation for this trial. The sittings were held in the palace at Versailles. His Majesty chose thus to make himself acquainted with all the particulars of an affair, in which the question was no less than to place bounds to the parliamentary usurpations. He had previously, six years before, had all the records of the country examined, and appointed an agent to make a report to him of all the laws and regulations relative to the privileges granted to those courts by his predecessors. Perfectly informed on the subject, Louis XV. was not long before he perceived that under the name of the Duke D'Aiguillon, the Parliament was preparing an attack upon the regal authority, even in presence of the King himself. The accusations brought were as ve-

hement as the depositions were absurd: the Commandant of Bretagne was accused even in that part of his conduct in which he had done no more than attended to his instructions; nay, even where he had only put in force the will of his Sovereign. The witnesses added to their depositions, arrets of council, and orders of the King. The whole procedure took upon itself the semblance of an impeachment, by an English Parliament, in which, according to De Lolme, *the prince finds himself accused in the person of his minister.* But this was a species of trial that was not at all consistent with the principles of the French monarchy, and the King hastened to crush, in its first growth, a precedent which was so likely to produce the most serious consequences. He held a bed of justice, in which, by the plenitude of his power, and by turning to the first cause of all the troubles in Bretagne, he put a final termination to all the litigated causes of which they had been the origin; including those which had been entered into against the five magistrates, as well as those of which the Duke D'Aiguillon was the object: at the same time interdicting all continuance, renewal, or even remembrance of them, and commanding the whole to be regarded as never having taken place.

The Parliament, however, immediately upon its return to Paris, took its revenge, by declaring all that had been done at Versailles void to all intents and purposes, by actually annulling the royal letters patent, and by decreeing that the trial should be carried on.

On the 2nd of July a messenger from the Parliament served an arret, issued by order of the chambers assembled, upon the Duke D'Aiguillon, suspending him from the functions of his peerage, and forbidding him to exercise any one of them. On the 3rd, a messenger of council served him with another arret, immediately from the King, ordering him, as he valued his obedience, to persist in fulfilling his functions as a peer.

The Parliament of Paris, the provincial Parliaments, the States of Bretagne, the Chamber of Accounts, the Court of Aids, were all instantly in commotion, and for two months a torrent of remonstrances, not only severe, but of the most menacing import, flowed in from all quarters. The deputation from Bretagne, at the time they demanded the complete reinstatement of the two Procurators-general, used these words to the King—*We have an exclusive right to our honour,*

our life, and our liberty, as well as you have to your crown . . . . We will shed the last drop of our blood to maintain your rights, but do you, on your part, preserve ours inviolate. The question, on which we address you, is not one of privileges, but pure natural right . . . . . These remonstrances passed from one to another, and copies of them were every hour increasing in number. The Parliament of Paris ordered ten thousand copies of its arret against the Duke D'Aiguillon and the bed of justice held on the 27th of June, to be printed. The King's officers, at Bourdeaux, went so far as to call the authority of the King in question; one among them wantonly brought upon himself imprisonment. At Compiegne, two counsellors, members of the Parliament of Rennes, spoke in such a manner to his Majesty, as to cause their immediate arrest when they went out of the closet. On the 3d of September, Louis XV. went once more to the Parliament of Paris. He ordered the whole of the proceedings relative to the affairs of Bretagne, to be removed from the registry. The proceedings of the Courts of Inquiry and Requests, he ordered to be dismissed from the Grand Chamber; again interdicted all mention of those questions on which he had commanded silence to be observed, and left the palace, or-

3d Sept. 1770.

dering the minutes of the proceedings thus removed, to be carried before him. The Parliament was adjourned, and at the opening of the next session a decisive measure was announced, that was at length to put an end to the contest, which subsisted between the King and his judiciary courts.

The memorable day arrived in which this important measure was to be carried into effect. Louis XV. tormented all his life with these parliamentary quarrels, which had now proceeded to such great lengths, as to make him seriously unhappy, at last put every thing implicitly into the hands of the Chancellor Maupeou, who promised him, *that he would take the crown out of th· regiſtry*; such was his expression. Possessed of this unconditional authority, bold in his designs, of unshaken purpose, as cunning as he was daring, and making the service of his master the medium of his own ambition,
7th Dec. 1770. and personal hatred, Maupeou began his career by causing the King to call a bed of justice, at which the first humiliation the Parliament experienced was, to witness the Duke D'Aiguillon, in spite of its arret to the contrary, sitting in his place among the Peers of France.

A short time after, this court saw that edict published by which it was called upon to keep in mind the true principles of the French monarchy, and to reject for ever those, to which, in these latter times, *the spirit of system had given birth.*

These principles, thus insisted upon, were the same as had been drawn up in the declaration of the 3d of March, 1766, and had been at an earlier date enacted, in the time of Louis XIV. in 1677. But the preamble of this new edict, in the view it took of the recent conduct of the courts, contained so many offensive reflections upon them, that it was impossible for any one to suppose they would be induced, without recourse being had to force, to receive or leave upon their registers such a testimony of their want of conduct, and of their arrogance.

Whence, on the part of the Parliament, a protest was directly issued against the bed of justice, and it was resolved to address the King by remonstrances, and, what gave the Chancellor still greater satisfaction, to put a stop to the progress of all trials, until the edict should be withdrawn.

Amid all this disquiet and difficulty, in which the magistracy was involved, ministerial divisions, and domestic improprieties, were, alas! every hour occurring. Some of those courtiers, who had been formerly the corrupters of the morals of the King, had recently persuaded him to give himself up, in the latter part of his life, to the influence of a favourite, the choice of whom, had it not been made so notorious a matter as it was, would have been equally deserving of reprobation; but when she was presented at Court, we cannot avoid asserting, that at that instant the last vestige of public decency was done away.

The Duke of Choiseul, possessed too great a soul to bow the knee before an idol like this, and rested the whole approbation of his conduct upon his long services, on the favour which the King had uniformly shewn him, and on that which he had experienced from foreign courts, particularly that of Madrid, but above all from the Court of Vienna. He had concluded the marriage between the Dauphin, and the Archduchess MARIA-ANTOINETTA, a circumstance from which the only ray of light arose, that illumined the melancholy night, in which France

was then absorbed. It constituted that tie by which the French once more bound themselves to love and reverence the race of their Kings. At length, the Duke de Choiseul found himself supported on all sides, by the most illustrious personages among the nobility, in the church, the magistracy, and among the learned. Thus, confirmed in his pre-eminence, he rejected all the advances of this new mistress with an hauteur as great as was the submissive attentions with which he formerly sought the favour of the one who was no more. To the very last moment he opposed the determination of Louis XV., to introduce such a favourite at Court, as he plainly foresaw that his Majesty, by such a step, could not fail to profane and affront its dignity. The Duchess of Choiseul, and her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Grammont, refused to sit down to table with her in the King's apartments.

Enraged at the contempt she met with, and apprehensive that she would, by such means, be deprived of her interest in the heart of her royal lover, the favourite resolved to have her own party, her own agents, and her own supporters: for this purpose she attached to her views the ambitious, the offended, and the vindictive rival of the Duke de Choiseul; this man,

besides the sagacity of his schemes, and the activity of his passions, had a considerable stake depending—the agreement was soon concluded. The Duke D'Aiguillon was in equal degree the favoured object of Madame du Barry's regards, as the Duke de Choiseul had been of those of the Marchioness of Pompadour. The Chancellor Maupeou did not doubt but that such a coalition would eventually triumph, and therefore made all possible haste to become a party in it. Although he was the creature of the Duke de Choiseul, he promised to overthrow him sooner or later—and he on his part was taught to hope for the destruction of the Parliaments, whose political existence was become incompatible with his own. The Abbé also, who was over the department of the finances, as unprincipled as he was unpitying, attached himself to the mistress, who pillaged them, and to the Chancellor, who was doing all he could to involve them in debt. Love, pleasure, vengeance, laws, government, the public treasury, and private fortunes, were all confounded, all involved, in that foul influence, which wantonly sported with the fate of France.

It had already happened, that in those moments when the weak Monarch found himself

incapable of refusing any thing to the object of his affections, he had frequently signed an order for the disgrace and exile of his first minister; but on the morrow, when he was again himself, he as frequently tore it instead of insisting upon its execution. At length, Maupeou denounced his benefactor as the accomplice and supporter of the parliamentary revolts. The King was irritated at this idea, and became still more so, when, observing the conduct of the Duke de Choiseul, he perceived that, according to the usual custom in all domestic troubles, he was exerting himself to produce a foreign war. In the meanwhile, an incident happened which raised the King's indignation to the highest pitch. The Monarch and the minister met in the gallery of Versailles; the latter was followed by a train, at the head of which he seemed to move with all the state of a king; whilst the Sovereign, with scarcely a single attendant, appeared himself to be the disgraced minister. This circumstance decided the fate of a servant, who was instantly represented as one that dared to profess himself the rival of his royal master. The nephew of the Duke D'Aiguillon was sent to the Duke de Choiseul with a letter, from the King, in which his Majesty banished him from Court, with many expressions of severity and menace.

Never did any minister, when in his meridian of favour and power, enjoy so great a triumph as did the Duke de Choiseul in his disgrace. Besides his friends, and his partisans, he found himself instantly followed with the utmost enthusiasm, by all the enemies of Maupeou, all the parliamentary parties, all those who, in the choice of the then favourite, beheld the weakness and the degradation of the Monarch, as well as the degeneracy of the Court, and by all those who, in the oppressive measures taken against the Parliament, saw unbridled despotism about to prevail. During the twelve hours that the Duke was permitted to remain at Paris, before he set out for the place of his exile, the door of his house where he was forbidden to receive any person, was beset with repeated crouds who came to leave their names: Princes of the blood braved all the various interdicts in order to throw themselves into his arms; when he left the capital, he found the road lined with carriages, and crouds of people as far as the first post. The gestures, the plaudits, the acclamations of the multitude, all evinced the general sentiment, that with him were banished all remains of French honour, and public liberty. Nor was it long before he had a crowded Court at Chanteloup, and Versailles became deserted.

The fate of Parliament was equally undecided; a more prudent conduct might have given it greater weight. The Prince of Condé, by his readiness to take upon him the generous character of mediator, proved that he deserved the civic crown after having won so many military ones. He gave the most salutary advice to the magistrates, endeavouring to persuade them not to deprive the people of that distributive justice which was their due, but to content themselves with the complaints they had already made of the ill-treatment they had experienced. Prevailed upon for a short time by such counsel, they resumed their functions, but soon again broke them off: four different times did the King order them to fulfil the duties of their station, and as often did they refuse to obey. At last, in the middle of the night, all the members of Parliament were awakened out of their sleep by two musqueteers, charged with an order from the King, insisting upon every magistrate to answer for himself, *yes* or *no*, whether he would resume his functions or not. In the night there was a division of opinions; in the morning, when all the members were assembled at the Palace, those who had answered *yes*, said *no*. The night following they were awakened again, to be served with an arret of council, which

deprived them of their employments, and was accompanied with a letter *de cachet*, exiling them all; and the greater part to places of the most deplorable description, unhealthy, uninhabited, and almost uninhabitable. In less than a year, the whole magistracy were treated in the same manner; turned out, exiled, and their places supplied by others. Provinces, cities, and whole families, even to the King's own houshold, were full of rebellious ferment. Only one among the *Princes of the blood*, was on the side of the King; all the rest were in opposition to him. The father and the son were divided: Louis XV. called the Prince de Conti *my cousin the procureur*; the Prince de Conti no longer spoke of the Count de la Marche by the appellation of son; the Count de Provence married without any of the Princes of the blood being present at his nuptials; the Count de Clermont died, without the King once sending to enquire after his health; a party of the Peers protested against the acts of the Sovereign; the military commanders were displaced by the principal magistrate, who was desirous of having his son, the president à Mortier, made a colonel—"This "request of your's," said the King, "is a very "extraordinary one." "What I do for your "Majesty, is much more so," replied the Chancellor; and the President Maupeou had a regi-

ment given him. Soon affairs took a different turn; those who had protested against the creation of the new Parliament took their seats in it; and he who had expressed his contempt of the favourite, in the most undisguised manner, became her most obsequious flatterer. The principal Magistrates of the suppressed courts, solicited the liquidation of their offices, which was in fact to acknowledge their extinction. The Duke D'Aiguillon, now Minister, and Maupeou still Chancellor, were jealous of each other to that degree, that the Parliaments began to entertain hopes of being restored through the means of the very man whose life they had sought. The ministers of finance and marine were both of them creatures of Maupeou, and were both eager to act that part towards him, which he had observed to the Duke de Choiseul. The prudent part of the kingdom no longer knew on whom to place their esteem, and beheld no other objects but such as raised their contempt and indignation. The magistracy was regretted, although the magistrates were no longer respected. The necessity for laws was felt by every body; but no one knew at whose hands to demand their administration. The new Parliament, which had distinguished itself by its activity in getting through the various causes that were brought before it, and for the wisdom of its decisions,

was as unhappily notorious for its docility in registering all the fiscal extortions; once it seemed disposed to risk remonstrances, which were insolently laughed at. The people began to support the weight of taxes with less patience, and to be more sensible of the attacks of corruption. France enjoyed little happiness at home, and little glory abroad.*

Let us now estimate the progress which these disputes between the King and his officers, for twenty-five years' continuance, gave to the new opinions that were afloat. What secret of government was there that was not betrayed? What question in politics that was not publicly discussed? And with regard to the origin of power, the limits of obedience, the respective duties and rights of governors and the governed, what stronger expressions were ever made use of in England than were disseminated in all the pamphlets that overflowed France, in consequence of the pride of the Parliaments when in security, and their revenge when overthrown? Who was there among their enemies, that did

* The Bishop of Senez preached, in the chapel of Versailles, in passion-week from the following text—*Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;* forty days elapsed, and Louis XV. was no more.

not, sometimes, think the same as they did; or who, among their partisans, that was not, sometimes, constrained to blame them? What honest man, who was also a man of common sense, but must have heartily wished for some curb to be placed, in one instance, upon insubordination; in another, upon power; and, in another, upon the scandalous misconduct of the many? And must he not have ardently sought, amid such numerous vicissitudes, for some fixed opinions, some ruling principle, in which all judgments could not be mistaken?

As to the abuses of the public mind, or the disorder of public sentiment, who was there that could have restrained either? Who, with any effect, could have kept a watchful eye over the general police of a vast empire, in which the respective authorities were continually engaged in contest with each other? A declaration came from the King, in 1757, which forbade any person, on pain of death, to compose or publish any thing which militated against religion, the throne, or public order. Helvetius published, in 1758, his book *on the Mind*, and got rid of the penalty annexed to such publications by making a short stay in England. A government, which, as it were, voluntarily submitted itself to the yoke of

moral turpitude, possessed neither the right, nor indeed the assurance, to openly assert itself the avenger of public morality. The rival powers were more studious of obtaining the support of men of letters, for their respective causes, than of watching over their own conduct, or restraining their own bad propensities. The *Social Contract* of Rousseau, was favourably received by a great number of the magistrates, because a complaint had been made against M. de la Chalotais, for having read it in a select committee, consisting of several of his fellow members. The Parliaments were delighted with Diderot's declamations against despotism; the Court, and almost all the clergy, were equally so with Voltaire, for his abuse of the Parliaments. Unity, concord, and perseverance were no where to be met with, but in the faction called the Philosophic, which, profiting by the disputes, the confusion, and the passions of others, went on in direct progress to the completion of its purpose, daily acquiring new disciples, and imperceptibly insinuating its maxims into the minds of all men. It is an exaggeration of the fact to accuse the Philosophers upon this ground, with a design to subvert all social principle, and overturn all thrones: this was not their design, although it was the natural tendency of their labours, for

they were by no means aware of the consequences. Those who lived at this time, did not aim at being the destroyers, but only the advisers of kings; and, indeed, Montesquieu, if he had never given to the world any other work than that upon the Romans, and his *Spirit of Laws*; Beccaria, for his Tract on Crimes and Punishments; Voltaire, if he had confined himself to his Refutation of Machiavel, and his Defence of Calas, Sirven, and Lally; Rousseau, pleading only the Cause of Nature, Morality, and the Gospel; and even the authors of the Encyclopœdia, wherever they pay respectful deference to religious principle, were perhaps deserving the indulgence of the several potentates of the earth. But the influence they possessed, they also abused; they knew not how to preserve themselves from that pride of power with which they reproached others, and fell from the exposure of abuses, into a forgetfulness of principles: while they pretended to speak consolation to man, they opened the abyss of despair under his feet; they talked of the obligations of virtue, and destroyed those of conscience; they argued not from principles so simple as the following—that although they were conscious of their existence, yet they did not comprehend how they existed, and there-

fore that their intellect was not the measure of truth. Many of these writers, after having combated the fanaticism of religion, gave rise to another species, a thousand times more terrible, the fanaticism of impiety. They even formed themselves into a conspiracy to annihilate Christianity. That such a horrible design did secretly exist, has been gathered from the contents of Voltaire's Correspondence, the publicity of which was one fearful proof of the success with which these conspirators plotted. To dare to print such letters was still more monstrous than to have dared to write them. But these unheard-of, and scandalous violations of every thing true and sacred, were all surpassed by one whose enormity astonished human reason: the instance of a King, and in every other respect one of the greatest Kings that ever wore a crown, displaying his own sentiments in this Correspondence, as congenial with those of the overthrowers of morality and public order; like them too, altogether heedless of the consequences that must inevitably follow from their scheme, and concluding his letters in the same manner as they did theirs, by blaspheming religion, and characterizing it with an epithet too gross to proceed from any other minds than those that constituted

their *infamous* conspiracy, throughout which they uniformly encouraged each other to do all they could to *cruſh* the existence of the Christian faith. When we contemplate the great Frederic, transformed into an impious rhetorician, pronouncing publicly in his own academy the eulogium of a man who could produce a performance like that of *The Machine-man*, *l'homme machine* *; when we behold the *Solomon of the North* abusing the Sovereign power, by forcing all the Catholic churches of his kingdom to celebrate the obsequies of him who died blaspheming Christ †; when such circumstances strike our view, how natural is it for us to enquire, whither the dignity, the genius, and the reason of Frederic were fled? It is on such occasions as these, that we lament the infirmities of human nature.

Louis XVI. as soon as he ascended the throne, seemed to chase from it, by his presence, every impurity that encompassed it. Not that his predecessor had ever fallen so low as impiety! for, amid the greatest aberrations of his reign, he always maintained an inviolable respect for the re- Louis XVI.

* La Métrie. † Voltaire.

ligion of his fathers. When in the temple of his God, his demeanour was edifying; his book was always in his hand; his lips moved in prayer; and his eyes were cast down in humble reverence before the Majesty divine. But he deprived himself of all right to support by his power, a religion which he disgraced by his irregularities; even the devotional exercises he used were a reflection upon it. He relied with too much confidence, and he did not attempt to conceal it, upon the vain notion of expiating the offences of a dissolute life, by a death-bed repentance: when, however, the hour of dissolution arrived, and the hand of death was upon him, when the expiring Monarch shewed himself desirous of asking pardon of his people publicly, for the bad examples he had set them, and the little solicitude which he had manifested for their happiness, the courtier-priest, who was fixed upon to announce this act of repentance and humility, rendered it almost ridiculous by the forms to which he had recourse*.

* "Although the King owes no account of his conduct to "his subjects, but to God alone, yet his Majesty has given it "me in charge to declare, that he *feels regret* at having "given offence, by any improprieties that he may have

Louis XVI. presented the world with an example, in which were blended chaste manners, firm faith, and manly devotion. Before he had reached even his twentieth year, he had made himself respected for the uprightness of his conduct. Independently of that interest which his youth and modest air excited in every breast, or of that strong inclination and regard which he had constantly evinced for the welfare of his people, and which formed the distinguishing traits of his character, he struck an awe into all that were of a depraved way of thinking, and in their thirst for innovation acknowledged no other principle of action than what a restless, ambitious, and craving mind suggested. But the faithful part of his subjects, who had always manifested themselves to be good citizens, perceiving that an extensive reform was become indispensable, and that since all traces of former manners were extinguished, new laws were equally necessary, conceived many plans of change, which were all grounded upon the pro-

" been guilty of; and that, if it should please God to restore " him, he will henceforth live only for the maintenance of " religion, and the felicity of his people."

Discourse of Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, in the Œil de Beuf, during the Administration of the Sacraments to Louis XV.

mising virtues of the young King, and for the execution of which they were well aware they might look to his authority as the guarantee of their hopes.

All, indeed, depended upon the counsels by which he might be guided at first. His earliest consideration was the inexperience of his youth, and the magnitude of his duties; he summoned, therefore, to his aid, the wisdom of those whose judgment had been tried. For awhile his choice balanced between the two former ministers, Machault and Maurepas, each alike distinguished for the qualities of his mind, and each reaping knowledge from the service of many years; each also the more eligible on account of the disgrace and exile heaped upon him by the despotic will of a mistress to the throne. If we are to pay any credit to some private accounts, which have been mentioned as absolute facts, a message was already dispatched to Machault; but, by a casual delay in the departure of the messenger, it was retarded, and advantage was taken of this accident to incline the young Prince to alter his election, and to fix it upon Maurepas. Never did so insignificant a cause produce such vast and deplorable consequences.

The qualifications of the mind, the treasures of memory, a quick and penetrating look, an exemplary disinterestedness, a constitutional goodness of heart, that not unfrequently betrayed him into the liveliest emotions of sensibility, were the amiable characteristics by which Count Maurepas was distinguished. But with all these he was not adapted for the station that he was about to fill, nor for the times in which he was coming to it. Superficial when he ought to have been profound; trifling with subjects of serious import, looking no farther than the affair of the moment, and unwilling to look forward lest he should find cause for uneasiness, this Prime Minister did not provide for the future condition of France, nor for the youth of the King, but only seemed to consider how many years he himself might yet hope to live; his resolution was to pass them without trouble, without any extraordinary exertions, and without a rival; to draw off the attention of his Majesty from business, rather than to qualify him for the conduct of it, and to restore every thing to its former state, doubtless from an idea that every thing should go on as well and smoothly as possible, but likewise with a determination to give up the most worthy persons' decisions, and the most salutary projects, Maurepas.

the instant they appeared to require a persevering struggle against protracted difficulties.

Machault. Machault would have been found less amiable in society, less brilliant in his repartees, and more strict, perhaps, with the Prince and the people in the direction which he would have given to the business of the State: but he was deeply versed in the science of government; he possessed circumspection and firmness, qualities of which the monarchy never stood in greater need: he would have been both a minister and a Mentor to Louis XVI. Machault would have tempered his tender virtue with nerve and resolution, he would have encompassed it with prudence, and fortified it with discernment; he would have pointed out to his master, when the wishes of his people ought to be received, and when anticipated, and when, consistently with their happiness, they ought to be rejected. He would have taught Louis XVI. to study with profit, what he read with sacred attention, those valuable manuscripts of a father whom France lamented as sincerely as Rome once deplored a Germanicus. When he perceived in the plans of the late Dauphin the noble and virtuous design of restoring to the nation its States-

general, he would have carefully considered whether persons and things were not drawn towards this important measure by the torrent of circumstances, the events of the last reign, the examples of a neighbouring people continually challenging the attention of the world, and the daily increasing sway of public opinion; he would have judged whether the interests of the royal prerogative would not have been better consulted in anticipating, by a voluntary grant, the moment when he would be addressed by an imperative demand; and whether the time for leading those great assemblies of the nation to monarchical habits, were not at the commencement of a virtuous reign, in consequence of the unbiassed wish of a young King, who in every action displayed his love of his subjects, and under the auspices of the memory of one, dear to every Frenchman. But how contrary was the conduct of the Count de Maurepas! he began with turning out Chancellor Maupeou, who, as he boasted, *had recovered the crown from the registry*, he resolved to annul the new Parliament, to whom the King had said, *assure yourselves of my protection*; advised the members *to go to the Palace in dominos*, because they had complained of having been insulted as they went: repaired to the Opera to

receive the applause of the pit; then returned to Versailles, to tell the King that he brought him the homage of the public; went back to Paris, four days after, to be present, concealed in the private box of the Grand-Chamber, at the
12th Nov. 1774. Bed of Justice, where Louis XVI. re-established, in person, all those tribunals which Louis XV. had abolished, and abolished all those which Louis XV. had established, finally leaving himself at the mercy of the very men, whom his predecessor had solemnly declared he should never forgive.

The exile of Maupeou may be easily accounted for. It was impossible that the uncontaminated uprightness of the young Monarch should, without repugnance, suffer the approach of a ministry of prostitution. Morality was not yet to be sacrificed to talent; their union might and ought to have been effected.

We know too, that the recall of the Parliaments was a question pregnant with much difficulty; indeed, much might be advanced as to the advantages and the dangers of such a project, for they were both of magnitude. The Parliaments, whose proceedings had long been violent and

unjust, had, at last, themselves experienced an act of injustice, vehement and lasting. That individual interest, however, which they were able to attach to their cause, weak and inefficient as it must have been without other co-operation, became of eventful importance when the public interest was united with it. The idea of blending the former and the new magistracy had before occurred, even to him by whom the first had been banished, and the second summoned. It had been tried, and had succeeded in some provinces. The project had been formed for the capital also, and was already far advanced in its execution.

But to substitute, on a sudden, the combinations of a Miromesnil, the keeper of the great seal, for the schemes of a Maupeou; to invest a mind so weak as the former, with powers to re-establish what a soul so resolute as the latter had abolished; to decree a triumph, when pardon ought to have been vouchsafed; to suffer a whole body to assemble, without the smallest check upon pretensions, which they had ever peremptorily insisted upon, and were now about to exercise with a spirit of resentment which they never would cease to foster; to reinstate them even in the Miromesnil.

abuses of their power, even in that venality of places, which in its outset degrades, and in its effect corrupts justice; to restore them to that extent of judiciary authority, by which the fate of those within their jurisdiction, was made a secondary object to the convenience of the judges; thus to revoke all that was salutary in the operations of Maupeou, the suppression of *sugar-plumbs*, *épices*, a word one is ashamed to mention even on the bare mention of it, and that happy distribution of *superior councils*, which in common law brought the Courts nearer to the clients, and in criminal justice tended to lessen the number of crimes by the promptness of punishment; in ſhort, after having rewarded revolt, to punish submission; not only inflict privation, but even to heap ingratitude upon repeated outrage, on those Magistrates, who reluctantly, and from a mere sense of duty, had repaired to the assistance of their Sovereign, and taken their places, precisely as he had marked them out for them, in his new tribunals, with scrupulous exactness fulfilling their duty, and disappointing, by the integrity of their conduct, the malevolent eagerness of those who watched for an opportunity of exclaiming against them;—to act thus was to pursue a line of conduct, respecting which there

cannot possibly exist two opinions. If taken in a moral point of view, it was a wilful forgetfulness of all the restraining principles of justice and of honour; it was a political anomaly, an absolute delirium, which posterity will scarcely conceive possible, and will never prevail upon itself to forgive; and, to sum up the whole, it constituted the first link in that chain of immediate facts, in which we are to look for the causes of the overthrow of France.

The first thing the Parliament did, after its re-establishment, was to protest, the very next day, against the edict by which it had been renewed; against the forms of the Bed of Justice, in which the King had once more called it into existence; and against that phantom of precaution, which Miromesnil had weakly persuaded himself would prove an invincible safeguard. The doctrine held at the Palace was, that the Parliament had never ceased to exist in its members, though deprived of their privileges, dispersed, and reimbursed; that the edict of restoration had in no degree been necessary to its existence, but had, on the contrary, trespassed on its rights. The King had, by this edict, suppressed the Chamber of requests, but found himself obliged, nine

months after, to revoke the suppression; anxious, likewise, to put an end to all old dissentions, he commanded that every thing should be forgotten, and all that had passed be never again mentioned: notwithstanding which, in all the courts of the kingdom, the Magistrates who had consented to take their seats in the new Parliament, met with the severest vexations from their compeers. The King, in 1776, chose Mr. Turgot for his confidential Minister, whom, in 1782, Mr. Necker succeeded. The former gave umbrage to the Parliament, by the abolition of the *corvée*, the latter by the institution of the provincial assemblies. The King was constrained to dismiss both these ministers; and, lastly, his Majesty forbade his courts, when they were re-established, to give in their resignation upon pain of forfeiture. Four years after, however, on the 4th of September, 1778, the Parliament of Rouen sent its resignation into the King, prefaced with several remonstrances, in which they were bold enough to paraphrase the famous line,

"L'injustice à la fin produit l'indépendence."
Oppression in the event dissolves obedience.

American war. It was in this very year that the Anglo-American colonies, having declared themselves independent

of their mother-country, and their Sovereign, prevailed upon the King of France to conclude a treaty with them, which soon lighted up the torch of war in the four quarters of the world, and at length produced when peace was made, effects more fatal than the war itself.

Joseph II. when at Versailles, was asked his opinion of the designs of the American insurgents—" I am not a proper judge," he answered, " for it is my peculiar business to be a royalist." Thus did he, in a single sentence, express all that was to be said, and indeed all that was, or rather was not, to be done in that momentous and perilous conjuncture of affairs.

To be just to Count Maurepas, we must acknowledge his unwillingness to enter into the quarrel; whether this backwardness proceeded from a love of repose, or from an apprehension of consequences in Council, he contended to the last against the motion for war, which in the end was carried, but he was not able to resist the opinions of all the other ministers, supported as they were by the approbation and even the wishes of the nation; for never was any war more popular than that of 1778. This popular sense of the war arose, in some degree,

out of the novel ideas with which the public mind was impressed, in great measure, from that want of action by which a numerous youth, of ardent propensities, but without pursuits, was rendered restless; but chiefly from that abuse of good fortune, which England demonstrated, in all its conduct, after a seven year's war, and from the recollection of a peace which that country had forced upon France in 1763, and which it was impossible for her to digest, as well as from the consideration of an English commissary's residing at Dunkirk, whose presence had for fifteen years been a continual insult. The answer of the Privernates, to the Senate of Rome, will for ever obtain in similar circumstances.—" Will you observe the articles of " peace now concluded upon?"—" Yes, if we " do not find them so rigorous and humiliating " as not only to give us a right, but to make " it our duty, to break through them, if we " can do it with advantage to ourselves."—— Under such circumstances it was, the Duke de Choiseul had been constrained to sign the treaty of peace in 1763, and in 1769 found his revenge, by succeeding in his endeavours to stir up the inhabitants of Boston to revolt, and by kindling that spark of insurrection which ten years afterwards burst into an irresistible conflagration.

Never was there a King of France who was a better Frenchman than Louis XVI. or more attached to the national honour. All those sentiments, with which at that period the minds of his subjects were transported, were collected in his heart; he was in raptures at the thought of the reproduction of a French marine, and, as the first step towards it, increased the fund set apart for naval purposes; whenever any savings were mentioned to him in other departments of administration, his immediate observation was invariably, "Well, this will enable us to have more "ships." He had already fitted out a fine fleet, and was impatient to see it signalize itself; a wish, the ardour of which, a circumstance of small import greatly increased. He had been reading the historian Gibbon, and felt offended at the following passage, in the sixth volume—"Of "what consequence is it, that a Prince of the "House of Bourbon sleeps upon his throne at "noon day?" He was heard to exclaim with quickness, "I will prove to these English that I "do not sleep."

Sentiments such as these were certainly natural, and for the most part praiseworthy, nor was there one that had not some ground of pretext; they were also fully gratified. Suffren,

Bouillé, la Motte Piquet, Guichen, Crillon, La Fayette, Rochambeau, Du Rumain, La Clocheterie, Du Couedic, Fabri, and a hundred others, who equally deserve our honourable mention, led the armaments of Louis XVI. on both elements, to glory. Even the unfortunate battle of the Count de Grasse, did honour to the valour of France, if we pass over the bitter recollections of the want of discipline too plainly evidenced upon that occasion. A Prince of the blood, since drawn into the whirlpool of the plots of an iniquitous faction, signalized himself greatly by his intrepidity at the fight off Ushant. Two other Princes *, one of whom was the King's brother, rivalled the bravest of the grenadiers in valorous effort, at the siege of Gibraltar. These brilliant achievements were followed up by useful consequences. The armed neutrality of Europe proved that the councils of France were as prevailing as her arms. Louis XVI. seemed alone to have the disposal of the general cause; and, at the same time that he preserved the greater part of Europe from the scourge of war, and dispatched his armies to the new world to reap new triumphs, he heaped upon his own kingdoms all the blessings of peace. He founded or

* The Count D'Artois, and the Duke of Bourbon.

improved hospitals; at his word humanity explored the prisons; he honoured and encouraged agriculture, cut canals, dried up marshy land, built bridges, abolished feudal service, established schools for the people, reformed the criminal laws, banished from the code the torture of the question, equalized the assessment of taxes, eased the burthens of the most oppressed part of his subjects, imposed upon himself severe retrenchments, and made every part of his expenditure accountable to laws that could not be altered. Peace arrived, apparently crowned with all the success that could be expected from the war: the French flag had triumphed equally with its enemy's: the army had gained advantage; there was no longer a foreign commissary at Dunkirk; France was able to fortify her towns as she pleased, and the British colonies were formed into a republic.

But this republic was formed by the subjects of one King, which those of another had assisted in their rebellion; those armaments, by sea and land, having blended their flags and standards with those of an American congress, heard a new language, and learned to speak it themselves. Not long after, the marine council that was held at L'Orient, to try the officers of

the fleet commanded by Count de Grasse, declared those whom they were anxious to shelter from reproach *had deserved well of the nation*, a form of expression which was simple enough in itself, but was nevertheless novel in France. All those heroes who, in the flower of their age, had repaired to the New World to engage in arms, left their country Frenchmen, but came back Americans: they set out in quest of dangers, and military glory only, but brought back systems, and *patriotic* enthusiasm. They appeared again at Court, boasting of the scars of wounds received in the cause of liberty, and wearing with their dress the emblems of republican de-

La Fayette.

coration. La Fayette, who became himself the ally of the Americans before his Sovereign, who, with the prodigal ardour of strong passions, but with a mysterious reserve and perseverance, incomprehensible at his age, armed a vessel in the cause of the United States, laded it with all sorts of warlike stores, to the amount of nearly a million of livres, and withdrew from his family without any person having penetrated into his secret; La Fayette, who had commanded an army of insurgents, who had conquered with it, whom also the United States had enrolled amongst their citizens, and whom Washington for six years together called his son; La Fayette

once more entered his native country, full of the passionate desire, and vain illusions, of an exotic freedom; which, as soon as it was transplanted into France, brought forth fruit widely different from the general expectation. It is said that he had in his back-parlour at Paris, a design elegantly framed and divided into two columns, in one of which was drawn out at length the *declaration of rights*, published by the Anglo-Americans, the other was left blank, and seemed as if kept for the same *declaration* on the part of the French. His own intoxication was less surprising than that which he produced in others. The monarchy seemed as if it possessed not voices enough to celebrate, nor favours enough to recompense this young champion of republican liberty. The famous battle of Beaugé, in which Marshal de la Fayette conquered and killed the brother of Henry V. and kept the crown on the head of Charles VII. was not more celebrated in former times, than was the action of Brandywine, in which the Marshal's youthful descendant brought back the American troops to the charge, and was twice wounded at their head. From the highest order of nobility to the lowest rank of citizens, the Parisians vied with each other, who should offer him the most flat-

tering testimony of regard, and the most affectionate demonstrations of good will. If the Queen sat for her picture at full length for General Washington, it was at the request of Marquis de la Fayette. The King caused him to supersede all his seniors on the army list, that he might have rank equal to that which he bore in America. Some of the ministers were desirous of having him for their colleague, and the more repugnance he shewed for what he called places at Court, the more marked were the attentions he met with. His bust was inaugurated in the saloon of the Guildhall at Paris. His wife was present at an audience of the Grand Chamber on the same day with the Count OF THE NORTH; and the Advocate-general of the Court of Peers, paid his compliments to the wife of the Marquis de la Fayette, at the same time as to the Empress Catherine. What age, what mind, could have escaped a seduction like this, in which all the world conspired? Lastly, and certainly it was the finishing characteristic of this extraordinary enthusiasm, as it was the most striking symptom of the effect which the contagion was working, the young and intemperate magistracy of inquiries of the Parliament of Paris, was seen to pay its court to the companion in arms, and the beloved pupil, of Washington, and even to

devise expedients to procure his admission into its society; it is certain, that measures were taken to have the Marquis de la Fayette made an honorary counsellor of the Parliament of Paris. Doubtless the ancient idea of putting on the senatorial gown, after taking off the warlike breast-plate; the new charm of pleading the cause of liberty in the sanctuary of the laws, and on the banks of the Seine, after having defended it with the sword on the borders of the Ohio, were incidents worthy of romance; la Fayette was strongly solicited to undertake this character, but he kept in mind the phlegmatic deliberations of the American Congress, and feared being laughed at if he were to belong to the Parisian Court of Inquiry; he refused, therefore, to be made a parliamentary counsellor, but from that time he connected himself with some of those magistrates who afterwards reproached him with being less resolute than themselves in the revolutionary career. Conferences were held, and discussions entered into. A set of tenets were drawn up; and the batteries of their eloquence were levelled against those ruins of the feudal system which were yet standing. Some time after the Grand Chamber had condemned the publication of *Boncerf*, against feodal rights, to be

burned, the leading members of the Court of Inquiry combined to favour the *vassals* in all their causes against their *lords*. The Marquis de la Fayette was not greatly inclined to sacrifice the dignity of the noblesse—his genealogy was splendid, and he felt the distinction; but the Counsellor Du Port would gladly have made a pile of all the archives of France, and set it on fire.

I have however observed, and I repeat the observation, had it not been for the disorder of the finances, which it is now time for us to notice, government might have caused this ebullition to subside. Louis XVI. rouzing one minister from his apathy, and making use of the activity of another, while he directed the thoughts of all towards the several establishments and objects of salutary reform, gradually restored to the various springs of government their original power without any agitation, sudden change, or void being left in the exercise of public authority. The administration of intendants, important of itself on some accounts, and undeservingly calumniated on others, but much lowered, in the opinion of the nation, since the famous remonstrances of the Court of Aids in 1756, was at once supported, purified, and

honoured, by the concurrence of the provincial assemblies, which were established one after another, and annually increased, after several successful attempts had evinced the advantages of this institution; and one province was led to desire it by witnessing the utility which some other deduced from it. By this plan, every proprietor received, as it were, a political education, which became absolutely necessary to prevent the force of innovating notions from producing dangerous consequences: that force was evidently very great, and its remaining blind was so much the more to be feared. All minds, and all ranks of people, were turned towards the several objects of government. An archbishopric, consisting of five hundred parishes, and having a revenue of two hundred thousand livres, was considered in no higher light than as *a wealthy living*, if there were not some states to govern, or some civil interests to direct. The young men who had been brought up in the field of battle, threw by the commentaries of Folard, and took up the memoirs of Sully and of Forbonnais; in a state essentially military, the glorious profession of arms became a secondary concern. But, in a little time, this ardour was absorbed, its zeal moderated, and, if we may use the term, *royalized* by the provincial assem-

blies. The names of Sovereign and of country were not separated from each other. The different orders engaged in discussion with a salutary reciprocity of just consideration, and manly deference. The members who composed these assemblies, joined the King's party, in opposition to the parliamentary magistracy, which grew jealous of their influence. And the Monarch possessed so strong a claim to the public veneration, in the purity of his manners, in the incorruptible steadiness of his word, in the affectionate interest with which he consulted the welfare of his subjects, that all persons not decidedly of seditious principles, united in supporting him. The patriarch of the philosophers, Voltaire, died blessing *the King as the defender of justice.* All the academies resounded with the same professions of respect. The people became accustomed to a new order in proportion as the parts of the old gradually fell into disuse; every thing, however, was broken through, before it was completely established; the finances became deranged, and the derangement of the understanding followed.

The finances.

In speaking upon the subject of the French finances, I shall be careful not to lose myself in

useless discussion of distant periods, nor to venture upon too nice conjectures. It comprizes many questions of much ambiguity, on which even a Frenchman, and much less a foreigner, cannot yet hazard any decision without considerable embarrassment. Men of the moſt distinguished talents, were seen employing them to oppose one another; it was to be wished that they had applied them with one accord to the furtherance of the general good; every one had his separate calculations, and every one drew a different result; on every side *vouchers* were talked of. One party was against the new taxes; another declared itself hostile to some loan; this, asserted that the language of truth ought to be employed on all occasions; that, contended that the appearance of penury ought never to be assumed. Even public economy received a different aspect according to the arguments of the various parties. In fact, it belongs but to few persons to take a side in controversies of this description. My purpose is, to confine my detail to the few principal epochs, and incontestable facts, which have either preceded or accelerated the great catastrophe.

The Abbé Terray, when he retired from office, asserted, that at his commencing comptroller- Terray.

general, he had found an annual deficit of *sixty millions* of livres, and thirteen months of the revenue already anticipated. By oppression, bankruptcy, and spoliation of every kind, he at length, according to his own calculations, made up the deficit all but five millions. Fifty-seven were left in the treasury, and fourteen in reserve to meet any unexpected exigency; the anticipations were reduced to three months, and all these savings and supplies effected, notwithstanding he had provided for the usual outgoings of government, for the means of preparing for war, for the incidental expences of three marriages, and for the expensive habits of a favourite.

Turgot.

Turgot, who had recommended himself to the choice of Louis XVI. by his genius, his integrity, and by the blessings of a populous province, of which he had been Intendant, introduced into the administration of the finances, a spirit of justice, and a plan of general beneficence:— "None love the people, but Mr. Turgot and "myself," said Louis XVI.*; and their affection

* On the Government and Manners of France, before the Revolution, by M. Senac de Meilhan, p. 153.

for the people led them to abolish the duties on corn, to free national industry from the fetters under which it groaned, to take off the burthensome restrictions from the corn-trade, and to dissolve the slavish principle of Corvées.

These noble acts alarmed the partisans of abuses, who excited the people to declare against the very law that provided them with food; a fictitious scarcity was created even in the midst of the greatest plenty; and, at last, the capital, with the neighbouring provinces, broke into open insurrection. The public magazines were forced; the wheat and flour were strewed along the common roads, or thrown into the rivers; every bakehouse was ransacked, and the Paris mob threatened to proceed to Versailles. "Go on, my friend," said Louis XVI. to Turgot, embracing him, at the same time investing him with full powers to act, "go "on; with a conscience clear of offence as that "which you and I possess, we need not fear "what men can do." For once the people were quickly undeceived. The words of the King, and the measures of his minister, appeased the murmurs of the capital; the voice of the clergy preserved or restored peace in

the provinces. The King, in his clemency, was desirous of concealing the names of the instigators of this disturbance; but his attention was soon arrested by another, still more difficult to quell. It had been found necessary *to hold a bed of justice, and to issue the royal mandate,* in order to compel the Parliament to register the suppression of the Corvées, and the abolition of the taxes upon manufactures. The Parliament, however, came to a resolution to re-establish the Corvée, and to effect the dismissal of the comptroller-general. The fact was, the prime minister began to grow jealous of the influence which Turgot's intelligence and probity had gained over the heart of his virtuous master. His Majesty was therefore taught to dread great troubles; he was told, *that Turgot did good in a bad way*; and not daring to trust to the affections of his heart, in concerns of so great import, the young Prince gave up the minister whom he cherished to the importunity of his adversaries. In the meanwhile, Turgot had been suffered to enter upon the execution of his plan, but not to bring it to a conclusion. The economical order of affairs was totally confounded. The burdens, from which the people had been relieved by him, were again heaped upon them,

from his not being allowed time to repair the breaches made in the revenue.

The man appointed by Count de Maurepas to succeed him, entered upon his office with the following observation, in which there was more humour than policy—"He knew nothing about "finance, and before he could pretend to under-"take the comptrollor-generalship, he must sit "down to learn the duties belonging to its de-"partment." He was seized with a disorder of which he died in a few months, having neither learned nor undertaken the duties or the office. The Abbé Terray, who was still alive, asserted that the deficit, which amounted to no more, at his resignation, than five millions, was already increased to thirty-four, and that he saw no possible means of making it less, as there was nothing left to tax, and the public resources were entirely exhausted*. Clugny.

The short time that M. Taboureau and M. Necker were jointly in office, but little more was done than announcing that those resources were not nearly exhausted, and that arrangement was the principal requisite. Taboureau and Necker.

* Political Annals of Linguet, vol. 3, page 383.

Necker. Left by himself at the head of the finance department, M. Necker, after having been three years and a half engaged in it, completed and gave to the world his famous *Stated Account*, which drew upon him the enthusiastic praises of one party, and the censures of another, but which brought the accounts of the public receipts, and ordinary expenditure, to a balance of twenty-seven millions of livres in favour of the former, seventeen of which were employed in paying off unfunded debts.

M. Necker's enemies, however, publicly declared, "that he knew the great repugnance "with which Louis XVI. regarded every kind "of tax, and that he took advantage of this "weakness of the Monarch, and having begun "to borrow, still continued to borrow, and would "go on borrowing while he continued in office, "leaving to his successors a treasury loaded with "debt, and throwing upon their shoulders the "obligation of providing the means to discharge "it*." They added, moreover, "that the act of "publishing his *Stated Account* was to be entirely

* M. de Limon, Vie de Louis XVI. p. 24 and 25.

" attributed to his ambitious vanity, for that, as " the King's minister, he owed to no one but " the King any account of the state of the " finances; but that the sanction of the Mo- " narch was not enough for him, and there- " fore he wished to lay before the public a dis- " play, more the work of artifice, than the result " of truth, well assured that, by such an appeal, " he should gain unbounded popularity."

The advocates of this minister and his measures, on the other hand, replied, " that the re- " pugnance which Louis XVI. testified against " every kind of tax, if it were a weakness, was " such as his minister ought, at all events, to " pay respectful attention to*;" that " the " public declaration of the Abbé Terray, and " which he officially added to the last me- " morial, addressed to Louis XVI. namely— " 'That no more taxes could be levied,' gave " M. Necker the two-fold excuse of necessity " and convenience; since, if the resources of " taxation failed, some other must be found;"

* M. de Meilhan, on the Government and Manners, &c. page 180.

that " immense supplies were necessary to " carry on a war, the seat of which was at a " distance of 1500 leagues from France;" and that there was "no other expedient than that " of loans;" that " he, who, in the midst of so " expensive a contest, could procure from his " savings in the state, sufficient to pay the in- " terest due on these loans, would not certainly " find himself more at a loss for supply, when " government expenditure, and that of the navy " and army, should be reduced to the peace " establishment;" that " as to the publication " of his *Stated Account*, it was very clear when the " facility of procuring loans depends entirely " upon the state of public credit, whatever pro- " cedure raised that credit in the estimation of " the public, was altogether justifiable;" that " it was generally allowed good Kings, such as " Louis XVI. would never hesitate to declare the " state of a country's finances, and the actions of " good Kings ought always to form the standard;" that " granting M. Necker was *vain, ambitious*, and " *thirsting for glory*, yet, so long as he considered " this a sufficient reward, so long as he made this " vanity, this ambition, this love of popularity, " the mediums through which he performed such

" extraordinary service to the King and the na-
" tion, the motive and the deed were equally
" deserving of gratitude."

I have already observed, that I did not think it became me to take a part in any controversy; to these opposite opinions, therefore, I shall add nothing. One thing, however, is certain, that on the firſt reading of *the Stated Account*, all France seemed electrified with joy; all sides appeared reconciled, and congratulated each other; blessings were ſhowered upon the head of the King by all; his beneficence, his labours for the public weal, his discernment, were universally extolled. Every step he had taken, conjointly with his minister, to advance the happiness of the kingdom throughout the war, were admired; the hopes with which the hour of peace was looked forward to, were sanguine beyond conception, and public confidence was never so unbounded as at this period. Not a loan was opened but double its amount was offered to the royal treasury; and hence that danger which the enemies of this borrowing system pretended to foresee.—Foreigners, the British Parliament, the

ministers, and the opposition, Lord North, and Mr. Burke, were equally expressing their admiration in their different styles, to find the "throne of France filled by a descendant of "Henry IV. who emulated his worth, and who "had a second Sully for the minister of his "councils." This was a comparison, however, which, as far as it concerned the minister, his adversaries would not allow could on any grounds be applied: it is an illusion, said they, which will soon vanish!

About this time it happened, that the director of the finances had some dispute with the former Lieutenant of police, Sartine, a man who might have made a very good Minister for home department, but whom Maurepas had thought proper to make Minister of the Marine. Mr. Necker took advantage of a violent fit of the gout, with which the Prime Minister was attacked, to press the King to confide this department to another; at the same time proposing to his Majesty, the Marquis, afterwards Mareschal de Castries, a man whose life was a model of purity, honesty, and zeal; successful in war, and active in peace: in the former, he gained a victory over the Duke of Brunswick; and, during the latter, his whole

study was to make himself useful to his King and country: he was a man acquainted with every moral virtue, and skilled in every branch of political intelligence; he was a nobleman without reproach, a courtier without servility, and a citizen without imprudence. He was appointed by the King, who afterwards paid a visit to his old counsellor at Paris, that, by so signal a mark of gracious attention, he might soften the displeasure which the latter would naturally experience, at witnessing the appointment of a minister whom he himself had not selected. The premier dissembled his chagrin, but did not forgive the director-general for having suggested to his Majesty a change and choice, which could not fail to be agreeable to the whole nation. It is certain that, at this juncture of affairs, nothing was more indispensable than unity between the two departments of marine and finance; but this was a fact to which the vindictive impulse of the premier's mind paid no regard. A circumstance now occurred, which is in every respect most extraordinary:—*The Stated Account* was published, under the sanction of Maurepas, to whose inspection all the vouchers had been submitted: but though, by his name, he openly attested its authenticity, by his remarks he turned it into ridicule. A

still stronger instance of treacherous conduct presented itself, in which the service of the King, and the welfare of the State were alike implicated; and the personal safety of the director, who, according to the reigning opinion of the day, had so well secured the interests of both, was endangered. A memoir, which Necker had drawn up on the establishment of the provincial assemblies, for the King's private consideration, got into other hands, and from them made its way into the possession of some unprincipled persons who were decidedly adverse to the views of the financier, and who, that they might irritate the Parliaments and the different governors of provinces against the author of the memoir, were base enough to betray the secrets of the State, and to give publicity to a paper that was manifestly designed to remain an impenetrable secret.

Thus, at one and the same instant, become the object of so many powerful dislikes; his credit shaken, without which he clearly perceived he could be of no service; finding, moreover, that it was absolutely necessary for him to be present when his plans were to be discussed, and that it behoved him greatly to put an end to so mortal a manœuvre as that of outward

approbation and secret opposition, Necker demanded *admission to the council*—he was offered *admission to the chamber*; he did not understand the pleasantry, and gave in his resignation. Some persons have thought, that Maurepas did not intend to carry his revenge so far; that satisfied with humbling Necker by his refusal, and attending more to present than past circumstances, regarding him likewise as too formidable a colleague for a seat in the Council, he was willing only to keep him in a subordinate situation; an idea, to which the difficulty of finding a successor most probably gave force. Many of Necker's friends accused him of too unyielding a temper, and represented to him that he possessed the sincere esteem of the King, and the good will of the Queen; that all he had to do was to fortify himself with a little patience; that Maurepas, already eighty years old, and his health declining, would not long give him any trouble; and that this obstacle once removed, nothing would then be found to oppose the happiness of France; but, on the contrary, every thing that was prosperous would follow from the undisturbed union, and the liberty of action, which subsisted alike in a Monarch and a Minister, cordially associated in all their views, to promote

the public weal, to substantiate the comforts of the poor, to soften the rigour of the law, and to reform the manners of the nation. The Queen wished to make an effort on the mind of Necker, and to see him in private. All that her Majesty could say, to prevail upon him to continue his services to the King, was fruitless. In vain did she represent to him that public credit, that the means of supporting the war, and rendering the issue of it honourable, would suffer by his resignation; he was inflexible: and thus proved that his *Compte Rendu* had been published rather from personal motives than with a view of public good. He retired, and his retreat at that time gave uneasiness to all those who feared that it might affect the tranquillity of the State. The Queen, who had been actuated by the same consideration, could not help uttering a word or two of indignant reflection upon this Minister's conduct. Maurepas died within the year; but, that he might have something to oppose to the accusations of the French nation, he had, during the latter part of his time, in which he enjoyed the favour of the King, laboured to prejudice His Majesty against the character of Necker; this, however, he would have found himself obliged to use considerable circumspection and address in effecting, had the

latter consented to continue in office; for Necker would have had fresh claims upon the King's regards, could he have prevailed upon himself to make a sacrifice, the noble disinterestedness of which would have been the more striking, the more repugnance he felt in making it; but he retired from administration, and was not recalled. For ten years much keen reproach was heaped upon him, a considerable portion of which may certainly be ascribed to party prejudice, but there is much also which impartiality must admit to have forcibly applied to his conduct; and his quitting the ministry, in 1781, constituted the most serious and the most incontrovertible part of the blame with which he may be charged. Had he been with the King the day on which Maurepas expired, the whole power would have been in his own hands; not a word had then been heard of deficit, of Notables, of States-general, or of Revolution. Necker, at that period, was of opinion, that the power of taxation belonged to the Sovereign, and that it was politic for a king of France to have foreign troops about his person. By the establishment, also, of the provincial assemblies, he was desirous of guarding the throne against the attack of the parliaments, and at the same time of preserving the people

from the dangerous power of an arbitrary and inconsiderate administration. At that period, the Roman Catholic clergy of France were in charitable communion with the Protestant director of the French finances. That part of the high Nobility, who, with the distinction of a new education preserved the sacred fire not only of honour, but of probity, candour, patriotism, in short the ancient purity, rallied around a Minister, who appeared to them to breathe their own sentiments, of whom all they asked was to do good, and to which they encouraged him by their esteem and support. The confidence of all the other classes of society was as full and complete as that of the Clergy and high Nobility. All were delighted and captivated by the brilliant statements of the *Compte Rendu*. To have discussed a single article of it would have been deemed a crime: the King saw in it the love of his subjects secured to him; the courtier a means of seconding his solicitation of favours; the state-creditor a security for the payment of his rents and premiums, and the reimbursement of his principal; the artist discovered in it the hope of one day exerting his talents to the greatest advantage; and it offered to all a future prospect of encouragement or speculation.

In short, all the votaries of unsophisticated philosophy, all the distinguished part of literary society, rejoiced in the possession of a Statesman as eminent for his philosophical and literary attainments in France, as Bacon, More, Oxford, and Addison, had before been in England. All the Academies, and every institution famed for their learning and genius, as well as those that pretended to both, swelled the train of Mr. Necker's friends; and, whether we have more reason to bless or deplore the inevitable effect of printing, learning extended its dominion more and more every day, by the medium of that communication of thought universally established among men. Learning had, by this time, become a department with which every other branch of human exertion had some relation; for energy, if destitute of intelligence, frustrates its own effect. All that can be said is, that it is seriously to be regretted so much system should be necessary for the government of a people: I cannot, however, stop to go farther into the question, but where once such a necessity has established itself, it must be submitted to, and ought to be converted to the most advantageous end.

When such prepossessions pervaded every class in favour of Mr. Necker, it was impossible that

his calculations should be contradicted. He was therefore most implicitly credited when he boasted, on the day on which he retired from office the first time, that he had carried on three years war without a single additional tax, had been the agent of the King's beneficence in all its pious and considerable institutions which we have before mentioned, and yet had left in the royal treasury between two and three hundred millions of livres.

It required a man of great resolution to succeed a Minister who retired from his administration under circumstances of so favourable a nature; and Maurepas, notwithstanding he so confidently asserted, "that the man was not yet "born for whom a successor every way equal "to him could not be found," experienced more than one refusal from persons to whom he offered the situation of Comptroller-general. This refusal embarrassed even him, in spite of all his levity. At length he prevailed upon a Counsellor of state, who dared not reject the Minister's offer, joined, as it was, to entreaty. He was a member of the law, and a courtier, who had grown old in all the adulatory submissions practised in the society of the great, and the closets of ministers, as ambitious as a confracted mind

Joly de Fleury. 1781.

would permit; thoroughly skilled in all intrigue and chicanery, and completely ignorant in everything that related to finance; but he was a great retailer of anecdotes, and was wont to amuse the junior part of the Council by a peculiar, pleasant, and sometimes ludicrous, way of expressing his opinion; he was also often instanced as one *who knew how to dispatch an affair quickly*, a sort of eulogium that was but of bad presage, according to the circumstances of the times.

Joly de Fleury, so was this man called, was a minister ashamed of becoming one, and had scarcely taken upon him the important charge, when he found himself sinking under it. He was honest or artful enough to give out, that he went on upon what his predecessor had left him; he was not, however, financier enough to renew this resource as it was expended. He levied a third-twentieth that was not opposed by the Parliament of Paris, in which he had two brothers and a nephew; yet, in spite of the ease, and fraternal assistance with which he procured this impost to be registered, it was never collected to its full amount; a circumstance that seemed completely to justify the assertion of the Abbé Terray, and Mr. Necker's system. To supply this deficiency, he opened a loan which was

not half filled up. He saw it was impossible to go on, and requested permission to resign.—Fleury was one of those men who never miss the smallest opportunity of bewailing the general diffusion of knowledge, and it was easily perceived that he had so mortally hated it as to refuse to acquire it. Administration, according to him, ought to be as secret in all its measures as a criminal process, and both ought to be as impenetrable as the proceedings of the Inquisition. The people were not to be suffered to look into public affairs; advocates were not necessary in causes; writers were useless in towns; schoolmasters in villages; in short, one would have concluded from what he said, that M. Joly de Fleury could not carry on the business of administration, merely because the *common country people knew how to read.* He withdrew, after showing that he was little more fitted than they to the functions he had dared to undertake, because he did not dare refuse them; and proving that he had not known how to take advantage of the great facility with which the Parliament had registered every thing he had devised.

D'Ormesson, 1783. This Minister was succeeded by another member of the magistracy, the worthy inheritor of a name revered in the annals of justice and virtue;

but, above all, and what was at that time most essential in the government of the finances, he brought with him into office no other principle than such as the scrupulous integrity, and disinterested views of an Aristides might have owned, and such as his ancestors had transmitted to him from one generation to another. In his various pursuits, he manifested an activity of zeal equal to the purity of his heart; and even in some essential parts of his new employ, he was found to possess much ability; but, for the full extent of his office, he was too young, and his task was too complicated. One disagreeable circumstance attending his ministry was, that people took advantage of its peculiar character, and ridiculed the idea of honesty in a minister of finance. Some courtiers, who would have gladly seen another in his place, were incessantly repeating the burthen of a particular song, which in fact reflected severely on them, and was greatly to the credit of the financier; but in a country where frivolity has so powerful a sway, such a circumstance was very likely to implicate the success of his official negociations. If a person invited another to dinner, and the question was asked, whether his cook was a good one? the answer was sure to be, *no, but he is a*

very honest man. Another was heard to observe, "I have a very mettlesome horse to break in, "and have ordered my servants to procure me "a very honest jockey." A very great oversight was at length most unfortunately committed. Government interfered with the payments of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and every body thought that a bankruptcy was about to ensue. All Paris flocked to the *Rue Vivienne*, and although the government receded, the public anxiety did not subside, and the minister who had been thus taken unawares resigned. M. de Calonne, intendant of Flanders, and M. de Meilhan, intendant of Haynault, were announced by the public and their friends as likely to succeed; the former was appointed by the King.

M. de Calonne, Nov. 1783.

M. de Calonne had for a long time been marked out for this situation. He was called for by some, and feared by others; had warm friends, and malevolent calumniators; the former he owed to his personal qualities, the latter originated in party spirit, and more particularly in parliamentary rancour, as he had executed the office of procureur-general, in the Bretagne deputation, which we have before mentioned.

All candid and impartial judges have agreed in admitting, that he possessed many qualifications for office, but not unmixed with defects. His mind was fraught with expedient; he possessed a remarkable facility of design, execution, and speech; his principles were disinterested—that is, whatever ambition he felt, it was not blended with a thirst for self-aggrandizement; his manner of transacting business was elevated, easy, and affable; but his confidence in others was carried to an excess, and thence it was that danger first arose; he was eager to please—a disposition that renders refusal difficult; and his imagination was boundless, which too often induces to trust in groundless hopes. Those who have accused him of forming his projects hastily, according to the pressure of the moment, had either not read, or had forgotten, his speech in the Chamber of Accounts, where he attended to take the oath, as comptroller-general, in November, 1783. He there positively declared, that, "as soon as he should "have got through the toilsome interval, dur-"ing which he should be wholly taken up in "discharging the necessary debts incurred dur-"ing the war, he was resolved to enter upon a "plan of general amelioration, which, founded

" upon the constitution of the monarchy itself, " would comprehend every part without shaking " any, would give new vigour to the resources " of the kingdom, instead of exhausting them " more than they had been already, and would " finally disclose the real secret of lightening the " burthen of taxation, by an equal and propor- " tionate assessment, as well as by adopting a " simpler mode of collection." Then, taking a rapid but important view of the various prejudices which the disputes between the throne and the several courts of justice might have left to his disadvantage on the latter;—" Such," said he, " are my hopes, my resolves, and my most ar- " dent wishes; they require, nay they demand, " the unanimous support, not only of the magis- " tracy, whose good will is never wanting to the " man, be he who he may, that labours for the " public good, but also of every good citizen in " whose breast patriotic sentiment finds a place, " a principle which I have a right to invoke in my " behalf, and which pervades with powerful in- " fluence the hearts of Frenchmen. I entreat to " be regarded by all, as a man inseparably united " to the common weal, so long as the King shall " deign to honour me with his confidence, and " that in this character I may be allowed to

" expect, from the general interests, that my " efforts will be seconded, my zeal encouraged, " and my words confided in, in a word, that " every thing will conspire to promote the success " of my undertaking."

Nothing, certainly, could be more interesting than language like this; nothing could be more just than such a demand; nothing that could have a greater claim upon public attention than such plans. But, unhappily " the toilsome in- " terval" was not " got through;" the good will " of the magistracy" was not " obtained;" neither was " confidence put in his words;" nor did aught or any one " conspire towards the promotion of " his success;" " the plan of general ameliora- " tion" was not carried into execution, and the " constitution of the monarchy itself" was shaken.

In December, 1783, the month after the conclusion of peace, a loan of one hundred millions of livres was borrowed, on life-annuities, in order to discharge " the debts incurred during the " war."

In December, 1784, another loan, of a hundred and twenty-five millions, payable in twenty-five

years, was borrowed for the purpose of *continuing* " the discharge of the debts of the war."

In December, 1785, another loan, of eighty millions, payable in ten years, was entered into for the purpose of *concluding* " the discharge of " the debts of the war, and for the total liqui- " dation of all arrears in the different depart- " ments of government, and to keep up that " plentiful supply which was indispensably ne- " cessary to carry on the most serviceable opera- " tions with any degree of success."

In September, 1786, a loan of thirty millions was advanced by the city of Paris, " to be de- " posited in the King's coffers."

In February, 1787, after another loan of fifty millions being advanced by the *Caisse d'Escompte*, to be in the same manner deposited in the King's coffers, an assembly of Notables was formed from the three States of the kingdom, and two most important facts were revealed, at the same instant, to the knowledge of the nation: one was, that, since the year 1776, the public loans had amounted to SIX HUNDRED THOUSANDS AND FORTY-SIX MILLIONS; and the other was, that there actually existed an annual deficit in

the revenue of a hundred and twelve millions, according to the minister's own computation, which was very soon shewn by the Notables to amount to one hundred and forty millions.

It has been my aim, in the first place, to bring all the several periods of these loans under the sole point of view of their respective amounts, that some idea may be formed of the burst of surprize and indignation which resounded throughout France at the instant this unexpected and horrible conviction was made known.

Six years had scarcely elapsed between the statement of M. Necker, who, in the midst of war, had proved a surplus of ten millions in the national income, and the statement of M. de Calonne, who, in the fourth year of peace, brought forward a deficit of an hundred and forty millions in this same income, augmented moreover by eighty more since the first statement had been given in.

There were not more than fourteen months elapsed, since the public notice was given by M. de Calonne of " an abundant supply in re-

"'serve," and his speech in which he announced this "frightful void."

The instant of surprize and anger was not that of enquiry and equity. Doubtless there would have been as much injustice, as there appeared precipitation, in declaring this minister alone responsible for the extremity to which he had at length confessed the nation was brought, when he found himself incapable of devising any other remedy for the evil. And here we find those intermediate facts discovering themselves, which if we had related them before, would have broken the connection of the calculations, and which may now explain the progress of events, diminish the responsibility of the minister, and plainly mark out how he was driven to the last resource of calling together the Notables of the nation.

It must be allowed, that the period in which M. de Calonne was called to the head of the finance department was a crisis of alarm. He told the Notables, and what he said was contradicted by no one, that all the Banks were exhausted, the public funds very low, and all circulation interrupted. The alarm was general, confidence was ruined, and moreover there were

three hundred millions outstanding debts, one hundred and seventy-six millions of anticipations, and in short a deficit, the amount of which was sixty-four millions for the year, in which he entered upon his office.

He judged it impossible to make a single year's receipts chargeable with the whole of this load of debt; and thence proceeded successive loans; the total amount of which was three hundred and eighty-five millions, and, consequently, less by two hundred and nineteen millions than the absolute exigencies of the kingdom, which extraordinary expenditures increased; whence arose the necessity for searching some still more considerable resource.

In the then condition of things the comptroller-general could do nothing without the assistance and concurrence of the Parliament, and the Parliament was resolved to throw M. de Calonne out of his situation, as it had done M. Necker and M. Thurgot; and thence proceeded the Assembly of Notables, convoked for the purpose of acting without the Parliament, or of overawing it, or of preventing all resistance on its part, and of forcing its registry.

The Parliament had very impatiently witnessed the elevation of a man, who was the object of its hatred and resentment. The two first loans were registered without any apparent difficulty: the first was so evidently required by the circumstances of the times! and before he proposed the second, M. de Calonne obtained great credit by his establishing the new sinking fund, by which, in the space of twenty-five years, twelve hundred and fifty millions of the old debt would be paid off, and the state would be freed from an annual charge of ninety-one millions.

But when, in 1785, the edict for the third loan, less considerable by forty-five millions than the preceding one, and payable in ten years, was sent to the Parliament of Paris, the chambers refused to register it, and passed some remonstrances. They were, however, ordered by the King to carry it through, and to proceed to register it; a second refusal, and repeated remonstrances, were the consequence: "I will be "obeyed without a reply," said the King to the deputation of the chambers. The Parliament then did register it, but they did it by premising a formula, by which they designed to throw a

reflection upon the act of the Legislator, and to damp the zeal of his subjects. The terms they used were, *by the King's most express command*—to indicate, that *the sanction of the registry*, as the courts called it, was neither free nor voluntary. The Parliament did more, it inserted in its arret of compliance some observations, which inferred a severe censure upon the law registered, and upon the Governor from whom that law proceeded. The King, the next day, sent for what was called the grand deputation of the chambers, accompanying the order with an injunction for them to bring their registers, when, as soon as they were introduced into his presence, he addressed them in the following words:—" My " Parliament has not done well by inserting, in " an arret of record, intended to be made public " and to be dispersed, matter which ought to " have been confined to that more intimate cor- " respondence which I permit them to enter " into with me; I shall, therefore, erase from " this arret whatever is foreign to the purpose. " I consider it proper that my Parliament should " represent to me, by respectful and considerate " suggestions, whatever may interest the good " of my crown, and the welfare of my people; " but I do not expect that it should abuse my " kindness, and my confidence, so glaringly as

" to set itself at all times, and in all places, as " the censor of my government; I therefore " cancel a declaration drawn up with equal " rashness and indecorum." Saying this, his Majesty took a pen in his hand, ordered the register to be laid open, obliterated the resolution entirely, and scratched out part of the arret, and commanded the latter to be read aloud, leaving out the sentences he had erased.—" It is " thus," said he, " that this arret ought to stand, " and it is thus that I will it should be printed " and dispersed. Moreover it is necessary it " should be known that I find no fault in my " comptroller-general, and I will not suffer any " one to interrupt, by ill-grounded complaints, " the execution of those plans, which have in " view the good of my kingdom, and the com- " fort of my subjects. Let all I have said be " entered upon the register." The officer of records wrote as he was commanded, and read what he had written. " Sign it, M. President," said the King, " and recollect, M. Advocate- " general, that you have heard my command, " that it must be published expressly as it " stands;" then calling back the first president as he was retiring after having signed, his Majesty added, " I do not choose that M. D'Amé- " court be any longer reporter of my concerns;

" I desire you will appoint another, and let the " keeper of the seals bring me an account of " the appointment." D'Amécourt was a counsellor of the grand chamber, and court-reporter, and in that capacity was charged with the presentment to the registry of all the acts of the sovereign power; he was of great weight among those to whom he belonged, and was much esteemed in the world; he possessed a very excellent understanding, and his ambition was equal to the extent of his mind; his learning, his general knowledge, and his views in life, reached far beyond the narrow circle of a counsellor of the parliamentary body; he was also much courted by the ministers of finance, and, as is said by some, usually began by assisting them with a plan, by which they might become acquainted with their business, and then thrust them out of their place in the hopes of succeeding them.

The signal of disobedience once given, all the other courts began to reject the edicts which were sent them by M. de Calonne.

The Parliament of Dijon refused to record the grants of the towns of Bourgogne, repaired to Paris without being sent for, and were sent back

without being heard. "You have not done "well to present yourselves before me without "previous orders," said the King to the officers of that court, "go back and resume your func- "tions, and when you shall have sent me your "remonstrances, I will let you know my inten- "tions."

Three weeks after this occurrence it was found necessary to bring the Parliament of Bourdeaux upwards of four hundred miles upon a similar proceeding. This assembly had, in one instance, protected with great steadiness the property of the owners of estates on the banks of the Geronde, the Garonne, and the Doidagne, against a fiscal encroachment which had well nigh thrown the whole province into revolt. In other instances, however, this parliamentary body had rendered itself obnoxious to the censure of government; in the first place, it had formally forbidden the execution of the Sovereign's order; it was continually harrassing those of its members who had attached themselves to the cause of the King during the late troubles of the magistracy; it had also refused to permit an advocate-general to set among its presidents, notwithstanding the uniform success of his measures, his personal talents, and virtues, the public esteem,

the choice of the Prince, and his reiterated commands, had all united to raise him to that dignity. His Majesty, however, erased from the register whatever militated against the respect due to his authority:—"I have," said he, "given "permission to my court to lay before me any "suggestion consistent with the interests and "welfare of my subjects; but I will not suffer "them to forbid what I have ordained. It is "not for you to judge, according to your individual acceptation, my rights, and those of my "people, of whose interests I am the sole and "supreme guardian. Return to your duties, "and forget not that the first is to dispense justice to my subjects. I am well aware that "there are many affairs of considerable importance yet unfinished, and it is my express injunction that you instantly proceed to expedite their execution; and that your zeal for "my service should first of all shew itself, by "putting a stop to all those divisions which "subsist among you, and are so injurious to "that good order which I am desirous of maintaining throughout my dominions." But, indignant as the King felt himself, he yielded to their requests: *The Edict of Alluvion* was annulled, which perhaps it would have been found a difficult matter to support, but which, at such a

juncture, and under such circumstances, ought not to have been thus given up. The Parliament of Bourdeaux entered its province in triumph; and the victory which it had gained over the minister of finance, joined to the homage which was paid them in consequence of it, by all within its jurisdiction, amply repaid it for some few marks of the royal pen passed over its resolutions, and the harsh words of his Majesty's address, in which the government found some trifling compensation for its defeat. It is unnecessary, perhaps, to add, that the triumph of one *class* excited joy and emulation of its conduct in all the others. *Dijon* also, a short time after, gained its point, and enjoyed its own victory, trifling as it was. *Paris* felt ashamed that it had not persisted in its claims with more effective perseverance, and looked forward to the time when it might take its revenge.

In such a disposition of circumstances and of the public mind, M. de Calonne foresaw that he had nothing to expect through the medium of the Parliaments. He had, however, been skilful enough to borrow the two loans, which I have already mentioned, the one under the appellation of the city of Paris, and the other through the intermediate agency of the general bank; then it was that he resolved to carry into execu-

tion his great plan of general amelioration, by calling together an assembly of the notables.

Henry IV. had convoked the last assembly of this kind, and Louis XVI. was led away by the idea of following so great an example; the end was also similar as well as the means. All M. de Calonne's plans, when regarded by themselves, evidently tended at the same time to the comfort of the people, and the succour of the state: the King had studied them, had made them as it were his own, and had frequently vowed never to give up the scheme of carrying them into execution. The day after that in which the convocation of notables was made public, at the breaking up of the council, the King wrote to the comptroller-general these words—"I have not slept all this "night, so great has been my satisfaction." Assembly of Notables, 1787.

The choice of notables was carried on throughout the three orders of the state, with an exactness and impartiality that were highly honourable to the minister. He summoned several persons who he knew were very far from being well-inclined towards him, but whose intelligence appeared likely to be of use to the state. The magistracy constituted in this assembly, as

it were, a fourth order, which was the very point it wanted to carry in 1558; and among the magistrates summoned were the chief presidents, and the procureurs-general of all the parliaments in the kingdom.

It was a remark made at the time of the convocation, that, by the assembly being divided into seven committees, the minister might secure the majority of the committees, and the majority of the notables be against him. It is now said, that before the debate opened, the keeper of the great seal made this speech: "It is the King's "wish, that both in the General Assembly, and "in the committees, THE VOTES should be taken "SINGLY."

An unforeseen event, which took place about this time, already augured badly for the success of this assembly, even before it was convened: this was the death of the Count de Vergennes, who had succeeded the Count de Maurepas in the confidence of the King; he approved the comptroller-general's plans, and would have supported them with all his power, tempering by his own rigid caution the latter's volatile and sanguine disposition.—From that instant a struggle was expected; and

M. de Calonne, unsupported and alone, entered the field where crowds of his adversaries were assembled.

If, however, this Minister, even at the time that he disclosed to the knowledge of the Notables the alarming deficit of which no one had the least suspicion, had confined himself to a summary view of the state of the finances, at the instant in which they were confided to his management; had he shewn how inadequate the resources put into his hands were to the burthens which they were expected to bear; had he touched upon the necessity he found himself under to hush up this unfortunate fact, for fear of ruining the public credit, deprived of which nothing could be done; had he represented the efforts which he had already made, notwithstanding the numerous difficulties that on all sides surrounded him, as well as what he had yet to effect, and the vast obstacles he had to surmount to bring about his purpose, which was a matter of too great moment to be executed by himself alone. Had he done all this, it is more than probable, it is in fact almost reduced to a certainty, that the Notables would not only have adopted projects of as plausible a nature, as were almost all his plans, but they would even have sup-

ported the Minister himself, who conceived them all, saving a few modifications which the projects had undergone, and some resolutions which would have been suggested to the author. But the name of M. Necker, incessantly repeated, his famous book upon the administration of the finances, quoted by every body as a classical performance, his *statement* for 1787, a work which the peculiar circumstances of the times brought more and more into public notice, produced in the mind of M. Calonne an irritable sensation of displeasure, which he was not sufficiently master of himself to suppress. In order that he might succeed in ruining this rival in the public estimation, he first of all endeavoured to give a shock to the credit given to the calculations of M. Necker. He made it appear that the origin of the deficit was to be traced to past centuries; asserted that, in 1781, instead of an overplus of ten millions, there was a failure of fifty or sixty in the receipt. M. Necker, who had in vain proposed to him to enter into a frank and mutual discussion of the whole business, in presence of the Mareschal de Castries, felt very indignant at finding himself denounced to the world as an impostor. He wrote to the King, requesting permission to attend the assembly of the Notables, and in the presence of his Majesty to assert and demonstrate

strate the authenticity of the *statement*. He did not, however, obtain his request, and therefore published an answer to the attack made on him by the comptroller-general, who retorted only by causing him to be banished. Whence it occurred that Necker was brought back again upon the great theatre of public affairs, by him whose interest it was to have left him in retirement. His friends, whom the world would have blamed for their rashness if, without any cause, they had shewn themselves desirous of bringing him forward, appeared to act from a just principle when they defended him against an ill-founded attack, and complained that he had been banished.

The Notables, who could not be banished, with one voice called for the account of the receipts and expences to be laid before them: the first word upon the subject which the minister uttered was in his closet, when he exclaimed *these gentlemen are very curious*. His official answer was, that the King's intention had been only to consult the Notables upon the most efficient means of carrying his plans into execution, and not upon their substance, which was sanctioned by the Royal will. All the Boards exclaimed against this answer. The Archbishops of Arles and Narbonne, the pro-

cureur-general of the Parliament of Provence, and the Marquis de la Fayette began to hint the convocation of the States-general.—" I move," said the procureur-general, M. Castillon, " that " this paper be withdrawn," pointing to the comptroller-general's answer, " and that we im- " mediately proceed to take into consideration " the substance and form of all these projects, " from first to last." It was asserted that a National Assembly, at the end of the eighteenth century, could not be convoked nor treated lightly, whatsoever were its form; and that to lay before it the affairs of the State, was to subject them to its opinion.

Another idea with which M. de Calonne was prepossessed was, that the episcopal body were desirous of ruining him at any rate, merely because he had evinced a desire, which rested equally on justice and reason, to make the possessions of the clergy liable to the general and proportionate contributions which had been framed for all the other possessions of the kingdom. The Bishops denied that they harboured any such ill-will against the minister, even expressed their public approbation of part of his plan, and more particularly acquiesced in the principle of an equal contribution; but the clergy possessed, in

their own constitution, a species and mode of taxation so just, so paternal, so economical, so perfect that, in fact, it was not only the right, but it was the duty of their representatives to defend its regulations; and perhaps it was the duty of every Minister to pay a deference on the general question, to that body of the State which was the most enlightened, and most able to decide. A conference, by the King's desire, was held between the Minister and five of the principal Prelates of France; the Archbishops of Narbonne, Toulouse, Aix, Bourdeaux, and Rheims. Although the special object of this meeting was that part of the plans of M. de Calonne which materially interested the clergy, it was impossible that it could undergo examination without an investigation of the whole. "We "are ready," said the five prelates to him, "not "only to make every exertion, but any sacrifices "for the welfare of the State and the service of "the Monarch; let us only agree to render them "useful. Your idea of conducting the administration of the kingdom by a gradation of "assemblies of parishes, districts, and provinces, "is an excellent one; it has been proved by "the experiments which M. Necker has made; "it originated amongst ourselves. The first "qualification which you require in the mem-

" bers of these assemblies, that of being men " of landed property, is a condition of much " wisdom. It is a fundamental principle; and " that part of your arrangement, which is inten- " ded to prevent any proprietor from being ex- " cluded, proportioning his influence according " to his property, is ingenious: but let these " assemblies be composed differently. Your " plan introduces a confusion of ranks. In the " assemblies of parishes, you give the presidency " to *age alone.* In those of districts and pro- " vinces, you have left it to be determined by " *ballot.* You declare, *contrary to the object of* " *these establishments, that the presidency shall be* " *always vested in the same hands, and given ex-* " *clusively to the same rank.* You would *excite in* " *the minds of the members, a wish to deserve this* " *pre-eminence of situation, by holding out to them the* " *hope of being able to reach it, whatever be their indi-* " *vidual condition.* From each parochial assembly " nominating only *one deputy* to an assembly of " the district, and the latter in its turn sending " only *one* to the provincial assembly, it may " possibly occur that a whole Order may be " entirely unrepresented in the last, and it " will be but seldom that a just and equal re- " presentation of the three Orders will take " place. All this appears to us as having a

" tendency to overthrow the Monarchical Con-
" stitution. You would have the clergy pay
" their debt: so would we. We incurred it
" for the state, and on its account will discharge
" it; but, for the sake of that state, for ours,
" and for that of our creditors, who will be
" better satisfied, allow us to pay it according to
" our own forms. Your plans respecting taxes,
" the corn-trade, the suppression of the corvée,
" are, in our estimation, deserving of the highest
" praise; and we shall vote our thanks to the
" King for these great public benefits; but
" your territorial subsidy *in kind* is impracticable,
" and must be alike ruinous in its consequences
" to the Prince and his subjects; nay, even dan-
" gerous to the former, because oppressive to the
" latter. Experience and reflection equally op-
" pose the plan; and we warn you before-hand
" that, if you persist in it, insurmountable ob-
" stacles will be found to resist its execution.
" Substitute a pecuniary impost in lieu of it; but
" put it in our power to vote for such an im-
" post, by laying before us the accounts of the
" receipts and expences for at least the last
" and the present year. Let us be informed
" of the present state of things, and secured
" against the future; for even deputies chosen
" by the nation for its representatives would

" not dare, without such information, to burthen
" it with a new permanent impost of more than
" a hundred millions: and how then can you
" expect the Notables to take it upon them-
" selves?"

M. de Calonne answered, that it no longer rested with him to give up the territorial subsidy *in kind*; that the King was particularly attached to the scheme, had minutely investigated it in all its bearings, and had made it his favourite plan. The Miniſter again reverted to his suspicion of the ill-will of the clergy against himself, and, under the influence of this impression, gave way to a noble and pathetic effusion: " Come, my Lord," said he to the Archbishop of Toulouse, " grant me a truce during the
" continuance of the assembly of the Notables.
" Let us think only of the King and the State.
" If these measures fail, there is no one here but
" would have cause to tremble. It is a last re-
" source; I have repeatedly assured his Ma-
" jesty, that it would probably be the salvation,
" but might be the destruction, of the state;
" and that either it ought not to be resorted
" to at all, or thoroughly effected. The King
" is still firm; but his resolution may be
" shaken, and every thing will then be thrown

" into confusion. Let you and I then, my Lord, " come to a compromise; support my measures, " and afterwards take my place." This was precisely what the Archbishop of Toulouse secretly contemplated; and M. de Calonne only mistook in attributing to the whole body of the clergy the disposition that really actuated some of its members, with respect to him. The prelate with a sneer disclaimed the *unjust prejudices* of the minister. The Archbishop of Narbonne, with more frankness, thus addressed M. de Calonne.—" As you are determined upon war, you " shall not be disappointed. We will wage it in " earnest, but frankly and openly. You, at least, " advance with a good grace to blows." " My " Lord," replied Calonne, still looking at the Archbishop of Toulouse, " I am so heartily tired " of those given me behind, that I am resolved " to provoke them in front." With these words the conference closed.

In fact, the comptroller-general must have perceived the very next day that the war was waged in earnest. The seven Boards of Notables, at which seven princes of the blood presided, unanimously declared the provincial assemblies of good tendency in themselves, but, in their proposed form, hostile to monarchical insti-

tutions; the territorial subsidy in kind to be altogether impracticable, and that the tax substituted for it could not be assented to, while the accounts of the receipts and expences were withheld. The other plans were applauded, and favourably received. In short, in the unanimous determination of the Boards, the comptroller-general found the same opinions which he had heard in the conference with the five Bishops. The truth is, the clergy guided this first assembly of the Notables. They combined in themselves information, experience, the bond of confraternity, and a centre of re-union. Every evening the ecclesiastical members of each Board met at the house of the Archbishop of Narbonne, to state what had passed in the morning, and to determine their opinion for the business of the following day. The Marquis de la Fayette, jealous for the nobility of the exclusive ascendency of the clergy, and impatient on his own account to make himself as conspicuous in peace as he had done in war, was anxious, but in vain, that his Order also should form a point of re-union. The members of the Parliaments held little mysterious councils, at the house of the keeper of the seals; they spoke little at the Boards, looked on rather than decided, made observations instead of delivering their opinions, and

evidently reserved themselves for the time when it would be their turn; that is to say, when the resolutions of the assembly would be sent to them in order to be registered. The municipal officers, who formed the third Order, were entire strangers to each other. It is but just to remark, that they opposed, as forcibly as the two other Orders, the confusion of ranks. This observation is due both to their wisdom and patriotism.

The comptroller-general did not lose his fortitude, and was still supported by the King. He requested that a general committee should be held at the house of MONSIEUR. There alone he faced all his assailants; and if he did not silence his opponents, he forced them at least to admire his talents. He fought as he retreated. He declared, in the King's name, that the Notables might debate not only on the forms, but on the substance of the plans. He admitted the possibility of collecting the territorial tax in specie and not in kind, provided that a sum was offered sufficient to cover the deficit, namely, a hundred and twelve millions. In this discussion many strong expressions were used. The minister having suffered himself to go so far as to declare, in general, that the

King might impose taxes at his will, and that he did not believe any one in that assembly would deny it: " I am one," said the Archbishop of Narbonne, " and not the only one. " Taxation, both as to its quantum and dura- " tion, should be commensurate with the pub- " lic exigency, which is the cause of it, and " which alone justifies it." The Archbishop of Arles, as respectable for his virtues as for his profound erudition, expressed strongly a doubt that any other assembly than that of the States-general of France, could take upon itself to add so enormous a burden to the taxes already borne by the nation. The Archbishop of Bordeaux, with the more force as with the more wisdom, insisted on the necessity of producing all the accounts of receipts and expences from the year 1781 up to the deficit of 1787, that justice might be done to all, and that credit might revive from the public confidence in one and the other. The Archbishop of Aix went through all the arguments on both sides, and distinguished himself in a speech, for which, according to the expression of the Archbishop of Narbonne, he deserved *the honours of the day.*

Calonne proceeded. He went through the second, and entered upon the third, division of

his plan, before the Notables had come to any decision on the most important article of the first, the supplying the deficit.

The Notables persisted in the resolution of passing no act till the accounts of the finances were communicated to them, and the minister persisted in refusing them. Presenting them new schemes, he complimented them on the lucid analysis they had made of the former ones; and congratulated himself on the approbation they had given him, confining to *the form* the differences of opinion which had arisen between the assembly and the government. The Notables, who asserted that they differed in *substance*, would not suffer this oratorical flourish to pass. They requested the King to order the speech of the comptroller-general to be sent to each Board, and one and all protested against the pretended concurrence asserted by the minister. The greatest distrust prevailed, and it was impossible that the King should not begin to observe it. The Archbishop of Toulouse, who had a plan of his own, independent of that in which he joined with his Order, spoke a great deal in the committees of the clergy, very little in the assembly of the Notables, urged on his colleagues, and kept himself on

the reserve. He had already had the address to contrive to be called upon for secret notes, which had been sent to the King, and returned to him by his Majesty with marginal replies. The writer had taken great care that no hostile intentions towards the minister should appear in this correspondence. He seemed to have been engaged solely with the proceedings of the assembly, the progress of affairs, and giving the King information; but it is easy to see all the advantage his private personal views were to derive from such an expedient.

M. de Calonne might have gained his point, if, in publishing his plans of the first and second division, he had suppressed only two pages. Resistance grew daily weaker. The Duke de Nivernois, with his courtesy and smoothness, and the Duke du Chatelet, with his loyalty and patriotism, had been endeavouring to find a means of conciliation. They proposed that in the meanwhile the provincial assemblies should be convoked; that they should be consulted on what taxes would be the least burdensome to be laid on for the purpose of supplying the deficiency of the finances; and that the government should be enabled, by a temporary aid, to wait the determination of those assemblies. The expedient was very favourably

received. MONSIEUR*, the King's brother, had written a plan, which, on being communicated to all the Boards, had obtained the suffrages of almost the whole number. It was at that moment that M. de Calonne caused, or suffered to be printed, at the head of his plans, an *advertisement* drawn up by the advocate *Gerbier*; a dangerous publication, in spite of the moderation carefully introduced into it, and which, however excusable the intention or just the contents, was considered, in the situation of affairs, as a call to insurrection, addressed to the *Tiers-Etat*, against the privileged Orders. The Notables had left Versailles on Saturday, on the point of yielding, but returned on Monday crying vengeance. The fire of this indignation was encreased by the personal enemies or ambitious rivals of M. de Calonne, as well as by the warm friends and zealous partizans of M. Necker. All the Boards complained to the King against his minister. The Notables, having the Prince de Conti as their president, signalized themselves by the energy of the resolution they passed, and to do them honour they were called *the Grenadiers of Conti.* M. de Calonne struggled boldly against the tempest. He still had sufficient influence to prevail on the King to dis-

* Now Louis XVIII.

miss the keeper of the seals, who underhand intrigued, with the members of the parliament, against the very plans he had approved in the council. The Baron de Breteuil, however, whom he intended to involve in the same disgrace, but who stood more firmly than the keeper of the seals, and the Marquis de Montmorin, who, like a good subject, was alarmed at the general discontent, went to the Queen, and represented to her, that the minister who excited so much resentment could never retrieve affairs; that even the success of his plans, were they judged useful, would depend on his retiring, and that there was no danger which might not be justly apprehended from his continuing in office. The Archbishop of Toulouse now gave a more decided tone to the notes he drew up for the King. At the very time that Calonne was giving himself credit for depriving Miromesnil of the seals, he received a message from his Majesty, desiring his resignation. Notwithstanding which, the president Lamoignon, whom he had recommended to succeed Miromesnil, had the seals, and Calonne, while falling, disposed of the first office of the state.

Lamoignon, keeper of the seals.

The King then held a sitting in the general assembly of the Notables, and a thorough change

of principles seemed to have taken place. He announced, that *he had given directions for framing a law respecting the provincial assemblies*, and that he *would preserve for the two first Orders of the State the precedence they had always had in the national assemblies*. He thanked the Archbishops and Bishops for *the readiness with which they had declared that they claimed no exemption from the public burdens*, and promised *to attend to the assembly of the clergy on whatever concerned their forms*, as well as *on the means of paying their debt*. He concluded with declaring, *that he had ordered statements of the receipts and expences to be delivered to the president of each bureau*. The new keeper of the seals told the Notables, that in demanding this communication *they had done what they ought to do*; and the temporary comptroller-general, Bouvard de Fourqueux, read two projects of Calonne's, the object of one of which was to impose a stamp-tax, and of the other to open successive loans to effect the reimbursements, at fixed periods: and here ended his ministry.

A week after, the real minister appeared, and proved to be Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse. The Abbé Vermont had formerly been indebted to this prelate for being sent to Vienna, by the

Archbishop Brienne, Minister, May 1st. 1787.

Duke of Choiseul, as tutor to the young Archduchess, destined to be Queen of France. He seized this opportunity of recommending his benefactor to her Majesty, whose confidence he possessed. He had previously made several fruitless trials, in which he was very careful not to persist, for no one ever used his interest more modestly than the Abbé Vermont, but he was now irresistibly seconded by the crisis of affairs, the general uneasiness, and the alarming representations of two ministers possessed of the greatest influence. The Queen spoke, the King was persuaded. Both of them thought, not without reason, that nothing less than the public safety was at stake; and both, in the means of remedying the evil, were led away by public prejudices.

A circumstance little known will give a just idea of the various kinds of artifice practised by the Archbishop Brienne to attain his object. The Marquis de la Fayette, who never lost sight of his, who believed himself called to the universal apostleship of liberty, who now spoke of re-establishing it in Holland and founding it in France, who kept up correspondences in the former of these countries, and held committees in the latter, the Marquis de la Fayette had con-

ceived the idea of giving the assembly of the Notables a grand and singular direction. Were it even impossible to obtain the concurrence of the whole assembly, he thought of prevailing at least upon a respectable number to go straight to the King, and say to him—" You demand of us " a vote for taxes. We have not really any " power to give it. We are as nothing for the " nation, which has not delegated us. How- " ever, we will venture to take upon ourselves " to provide for the necessities of the State, if in " serving the King we serve also the French " people. Let a great charter be granted to us " by your Majesty; let the liberty of the subject " and periodical States-General form a part of " it; and we will vote the taxes necessary pre- " vious to a meeting of the States, the time of " which shall be determined on mature delibe- " ration." La Fayette, thinking himself already sure of several magistrates and of a number of the nobility, applied to the Archbishop of Toulouse to secure some of the clergy. The artful prelate flattered the chimera of the young American major-general, promised him partizans, and only desired a little time to bring them over; meanwhile, he encouraged him to preface the discussion of the future States-General by denouncing in the assembly of Notables the present adminis-

tration of the finances. This the Marquis did, and then went to the Archbishop to demand the performance of his promise. *All goes on well*, said Brienne: *come again and see me the day after to-morrow.* The day after to-morrow all went on still better; for Brienne was minister. He had taken advantage of La Fayette's enthusiasm, and of his overtures, in two opposite ways, equally useful to himself. In the assembly of the Notables, he excited him to a solemn denunciation of the minister whom it was necessary to remove; and in his private communications with the King, he said: *Here is a faction of insurgents forming. The present dangers require a prime minister.*

At first Brienne possessed the power without the title. Though simply declared head of the council of finances, he had the disposal of the places of the ministry, and instead of Fourqueux, who resigned, he took M. de Villedeuil, the intendant of Normandy, as comptroller-general. He could not chuse a man more respected for his moral virtues, more zealous for the public good, more recommended than he was by the esteem and gratitude of the province under his administration. Villedeuil, member of the assembly of Notables, had a little before excited their admiration by the disinterestedness with which he had argued for

Villedeuil

the establishment of provincial assemblies, notwithstanding the limits which they were to put to the authority of the intendants. Unfortunately neither virtues nor talents could avail in the tempest that was brewing, and with so unskilful a pilot as he who took the helm.

Never did a prime minister, however, enter upon the administration of affairs, attended with more hopes than the Archbishop Brienne. For thirty years he had been marked out for the greatest employments. The opinion of the Duke de Choiseul, who strongly recommended him to Louis XV. was cited, as well as that of M. d'Invaux, who had consulted him with respect, who had modestly written to him these words: *I ought to give up to you the office of comptroller-general*; to which the prelate had ingeniously replied, *I prefer your suffrage to your office.* Brienne had continued on the same terms with all the succeeding ministers; with the partizans of Colbert as well as with the disciples of Quesnay, with Turgot and Necker, and even with Calonne, whom he had directed in the choice of members for the clergy in the assembly of Notables then sitting. It was said that in Languedoc the Archbishop of Narbonne, reserving for himself the brilliant character in the States, used to

throw the laborious part on the Archbishop of Toulouse. In the assembly of the Clergy his influence was unbounded: on every great occasion he had figured most brilliantly. His diocese praised, if not the fervour of his piety, at least the abundance of his charities, and the utility of his foundations. The French Academy chose him one of their members; and the most eminent societies, whether of rank, or wit, or both, raised the Archbishop of Toulouse to the place formerly held by the Fleuris, Mazarins, and Richelieus.

Both the panegyric before his appointment to the ministry, and the satire after his fall, were exaggerated. Not that too much could be said on the want of foresight and of skill, or on the covetousness, which stained his administration; or on the baseness, cowardice, and infamy, that disgraced his last days: but it has been said that he was incapable, which he was not. A writer of great talents, and whose opinions would have much weight, were not his impartiality shaken by a thousand little personal recollections, said that Brienne, at the head of the council of finances, had never been able to understand the difference between a *note* and a *share* of the *caisse d'Escompte*; but nobody believed him. What this

minister wanted, and particularly for the times in which he was to act, was conduct, foresight, frankness, and real strength of mind. He was witty without depth, informed without discernment, cunning without skill, and bold without courage. He took Calonne's plans as well as his place, and modified them according to the observations that had been made by the Notables. But his first fault, and that which was to bring on all the others, was that of dissolving the assembly of Notables, instead of keeping them as a support of the government, during the time taken by the Parliaments to register the edicts discussed in that assembly. His friends, and particularly the prudent Archbishop of Bordeaux, had advised it. He might himself have observed the promptitude with which the Parliament had registered the loan which he had brought forward in the first week of his ministry, on the advice of the Notables, while they were yet sitting. He rejected these counsels of his own experience with saying, *that at Verſailles they were tired of all theſe diſcuſſions.* In like manner, to gain for himself the friends of M. Necker, he promised them to replace him at the head of the finances; and, as an apology for not keeping his word, he told them that *M. de Maurepas had raiſed in the King's mind an invincible antipathy to M. Necker.* In that

case the King should have been taught to do without him, for a minister, worthy of the name, would have been sensible that the crisis was one of those in which it was necessary to think of the safety of Kings, and not of their antipathies and disgusts.

June 25, 1787. On the day when the assembly of Notables was dissolved, the prime minister ought to have been struck with the prospect of the future preparing for him. While all the addresses to the King spoke of the *gratitude*, of the *boundless love*, of the *devotion of all the French to his sacred person*, of the *emulation for the public welfare which was about to enflame every heart*, of the *prompt execution of the plans of order, justice, and economy, which the wisdom of the Monarch had formed*, the first President of the Parliament of Paris rising, with all the members of the other Courts present, pronounced the following sinister expressions, which were all, if I may so say, pregnant with storms: *The Notables saw with dread the magnitude of the evil. A prudent and circumspect Administration should now remove the* NATION'S *fears of the woeful consequences which your Parliament have more than once predicted. The different plans proposed to your Majesty deserve the most serious consideration. It would be indiscreet in us,* AT THIS MOMENT, *to dare to point out to you*

the measures to be preferred.—The most respectful silence is, AT THIS MOMENT, *the only part we can take.*

Farther, in the last and memorable sitting, the keeper of the seals said to the Notables: *you have been the counsellors of your King; you have prepared and facilitated the most desirable* REVOLUTION, *without any other authority than that of confidence, which is the first of powers in the government of States.* The following still more remarkable words came from the prime minister, who spoke next: *Since one and the same interest should animate the three orders, it might be expected that each should have an equal number of representatives. The two first have chosen to unite in a body, by which the Tiers-Etat, certain of having in their own order* AS MANY VOTES *as the clergy and nobility together, will never fear that any private interest may mislead the suffrages. Besides, it is just that this portion of his Majesty's subjects, so numerous, so interesting, and so worthy of protection, should at least receive, by the number of votes, a compensation for the influence which riches, rank, and birth necessarily bestow.*

In pursuing the same object, continued the Archbishop of Toulouse, *the King will direct that the votes be taken, not by orders but* INDIVIDUALLY.

The majority of orders does not always prove that real majority, which alone truly expresses the sense of an assembly.

When one pretends to enquire who was responsible for the double representation of the Tiers-Etat, and voting individually, it is folly, or injustice, bordering on dishonesty, to omit these particulars.

The *moment* soon arrived, for which the Parliaments had reserved themselves to break *silence* and caſt off *respect*. The Princes and Peers received the King's order to go to the Parliament of Paris for registering the edicts passed by the Notables. The establishment of the Provincial Assemblies, and the regulation respecting the corn-trade, were admitted without any difficulty: but on the suppression of *corvées*, commissioners were appointed; and the moment the *stamp-act* appeared, the Parliament declared that *it was impossible for them to satisfy themselves of the necessity of the tax, before they had* themselves *ascertained the deficit, and seen the accounts of receipts and expences, as well as the account of the reforms and improvements mentioned by his Majesty*; and they *entreated the King to order these papers to be communicated to them.*

If ever there was a juncture that could command dispatch, inspire confidence, and make all private views vanish before the supreme law of the public safety, it was undoubtedly the present one. The conductors of the State had just emerged from a long and dreadful error; but they had had the frankness to avow it, and the courage to search it to the bottom; they were resolved to repair the mischiefs of it, and to prevent its return. The plans presented by the miniſtry had been examined, discussed, and fixed upon by an assembly of Notables, who had been very far from being servile. That assembly had verified this deficit, had surveyed the statements and papers, of which the Parliament of Paris demanded a new verification and a new production. The Chief President, three Sub-Presidents, and the Procureur-General of that Parliament were among the Notables who had revised them. A King, the honestest man in his kingdom, had solemnly eagaged to publish yearly the account of the public receipts and expences. He had promised not only improvements and reforms, but ſacrifices, the daily execution of which was apparent. The Minister of Justice, who worded and ſealed all theſe edicts, had been taken from the Parliament of Paris, who, in the tempestuous times of the magistracy, had celebrated the Preſident de Lamoignon as their hero, and in ordi-

nary times, had constantly held him up as an example of the nobleness, integrity, and disinterestedness which stamp the character of the true magistrate. The minister newly placed at the head of the government was as yet known only by the reputation he had acquired long before: nor had his speech at the close of the assembly of Notables been beneath his fame. The Council of Finance, which he had formed, was an undeniable proof of the purity of his intentions. The members he had added to the ministers composing this council were M. de Malesherbes, the Duke of Nivernois, the former Comptroller-General d'Ormesson, and the Counsellor of State Lambert, names rendered sacred by respect and public favour. There is not a doubt that if, at this period, the Courts had cordially concurred in the resolutions taken by the King, and in the operations of his ministers, France might have passed from a frightful crisis to a state of durable prosperity. That very Archbishop of Toulouse, who, thwarted in all his plans, lost himself, and justly became an object first of contempt and then of execration, would, had he been supported in his labours, have discovered talents, and have deserved to hear his administration blessed; nor would he have become the most abject of men, after proving himself the most unskilful: so much do the destiny,

the character, alas! the morals of mankind, depend on a single circumstance!

The King refused the Parliament communications that were at least useless, put them in mind of the nature of their functions, and ordered them to register the stamp-edict. The Parliament decreed new petitions; received a third order, which they repelled by a third refusal; and, suddenly accusing themselves of an usurpation almost immemorial; abjuring in one day, in order to overthrow the State, pretensions which they had set up for ages to agitate it; branding with the name of error what they till then had called the constitutional principles of Parliaments, inserted in their remonstrances the following unexpected declaration, which, broached amidst a general effervescence, could not but have such dreadful consequences: THE NATION ALONE, *united in States-General, can give the necessary consent to a perpetual tax. The Parliament has not the power of supplying this consent; still less that of attesting it, when nothing makes it appear. Charged by the Sovereign to announce his will to the people, they have never been charged by the latter to act for them.* July 24, 1787.

The remonstrances against a first tax were hardly sent, when the Parliament received an- July 29.

other to be registered. By the minister's advice the King declared, "that he would not leave "any uncertainty either as to the extent or the "limits of the succours which the situation of "affairs required," and the edict for the land-tax was carried to the chambers assembled.

It was scarcely allowed to be read through, so inflamed were the members by this kind of challenge. The Abbé Sabathier, an ecclesiastic counsellor, gave himself up to the most incendiary declamations, renewed the advice he had already given in the debate on the stamp-tax, and reproaching his colleagues for not adopting it then, asked if they hesitated now. The object of this advice was nothing less than requiring of the King an immediate convocation of the States-General. As violent and more of an orator than Sabathier, the counsellor d'Eprémesil, who had always gloried in braving the royal authority, supported with all his power an advice so pointed against it. The Duports, Fréteaus, Roberts, all the American faction of the Parliament of Paris, plunged headlong into insurrection. In vain did the wisest magistrates, those who had grown grey in the temple of justice, those who by their virtues and tried abilities should have directed the suffrages of their assembly, the d'Ormessons, Sar-

rons, Séguiers, and d'Outremonts, do their utmost to resist the torrent; their opposition was overthrown like a weak dike. Sabathier triumphed both over the authority of his King and the wisdom of his colleagues. To demand the States-General was resolved by the majority of the assembled chambers.

This resolution passed on the 30th of July, and was carried into effect the day following. On the 6th of August the King summoned the Parliament to Versailles, held a bed of justice, and caused his two edicts to be registered. The next day the Parliament, who no longer confined themselves to protests, declared the enregistring, the bed of justice, and the laws promulged by the King in person, null and void. On the 10th, Duport denounced, by the name of *the Fugitive Minister*, the person who had lately had the direction of the finances. The Procureur-General preferred a complaint in the vague words of *depredations, manœuvres, stock-jobbing, abuse of authority of every kind committed in that administration.* On this complaint it was ordered that an information should be lodged against Calonne and his accomplices.

The Archbishop of Toulouse, who, not satisfied with having superseded Calonne, persecuted him

with a cowardly cruelty, would willingly have given him up to the courts of justice, or, to speak more precisely, to the passion of the judges: but to suffer the Parliament to acquire a knowledge of all the details of the late administration, was too evidently to submit the present one to them. The King annulled the order, taking to himself the sole cognizance of the charges brought against the late Comptroller-General.

Meanwhile an account of the improvements and reforms already effected, amounting to more than twenty millions a year, was published by the council, and it might be seen that the court did not spare itself: the King, Queen, and all the Royal Family had set the example of personal sacrifices: the favourites, the courtiers, the Dukes of Coigny and Polignac had nobly resigned places no less lucrative than brilliant, which were instantly suppressed. By publishing on the same day the statement of these reforms, and the edicts registered in the bed of justice of the 6th for the two taxes, the term of which was also precisely stated, the King thought to overcome all resistance; but he deceived himself. The publication of his edict was on Saturday the 11th; on Monday the 13th, the Parliament, the Peers convoked and chambers assembled, resolved and published, "that it had been by a

voluntary deference to the desires of the King, that at all times they had been induced to register the taxes; that they had no power in that respect, and could receive none from the King; that this error had lasted long enough, and that the court declared that, *in future the King could not obtain any tax, without first convoking and consulting the States-General.*

During the long debate that preceded and produced this resolution, and which lasted from 8 o'clock in the morning till 7 at night, all the halls and courts of the *Palais de Justice*, and the very avenues leading to it, were filled by crowds of people. When the magistrates broke up the sitting, when the doors of the great chamber opened, and a resolution which, from its nature, should have been devoted to secrecy, was publicly read, a species of delirium took possession of every brain. It broke out not only in acclamations but yells; in transports of affection pregnant with danger to the very inspirers of them, and in as many imprecations against the government as marks of idolatry towards the magistrates who resisted it. On the part of these, there was a very strong re-action. While the grave senators thought only of escaping from effusions which they inwardly felicitated themselves that they did

not deserve, the young men of the chambers of Enquests were delighted to find themselves pressed by the crowd, denounced, it may be said, one another to the gratitude of the populace, and marked for triumph those among them who had given their opinions with the greatest boldness in the debate of the chambers. The moment the counsellor d'Epresménil appeared, he was lifted above the heads of the multitude, and carried to his coach. The imitators of his boldness shared his glory. The Temple of Justice insensibly became the seat of revolt.

That very evening an extraordinary council was held at Versailles. There was another the next day, and during the night all the members
Aug. 15, 1787. of the Parliament received *Lettres de Cachet*, commanding them to repair to Troyes in Champagne, which they obeyed.

Two days after this, the King's brothers were sent to Paris to cause the two edicts to be registered; MONSIEUR to the Chamber of Accounts, the Count d'ARTOIS to the Court of Aides. The latter was insulted by a body of seditious people, his guards attacked, and himself thought to be in real danger. This it was necessary to repel, and several persons were crushed to death in the

crowd, owing to their insolence or their indiscretion. Mareschal Biron, who had fortunately the direction of the police, issued orders which dispersed the mobs, and restored tranquillity.

The ferment however was soon revived by the resolutions of the two Courts. The Chamber of Accounts, who before they received MONSIEUR had protested against all that was to be done, repeated their protests the moment he was gone. They did not stop there. They declared the land-tax to be, *a real encroachment upon property.* They called the stamp-tax, *a disastrous tax, destructive of commerce, and prejudicial to the tranquillity of the citizens.* They complained of the banishment and demanded the return of the Magistrates of the Parliament, and applauded their *conduct,* as being *dictated to them by the purest patriotism:* then imitating what they applauded, and asserting in their turn that, *according to the constitutional forms of the Monarchy, all subsidies of a new nature required the consent of the nation,* the Chamber of Accounts *declared null and illegal the entry made in the registers of new taxes, which could not be agreed to but by the States-General.*

The Court of Aides had adjourned their debate till the next day. The place of their sittings was,

it may be said, besieged by an army of attorneys, writers, and the whole disorderly corps of clerks belonging to the several jurisdictions of the capital. The seditious being informed that the sitting was about to be concluded, forced the doors of the chamber before the Court had withdrawn, and positively insisted on the resolution adopted being publicly read. They had cause to be satisfied with it. The Court of Aides in concluding, like the Chamber of Accounts, " for the nullity of " the entries made in the registers the day be- " fore the recal of the Parliament, and the con- " vocation of the States-General," had expressed themselves with much greater boldness. Repeating that the edicts registered were *disastrous laws*, they added, that *a nation who payed six hundred millions ought to be sheltered from all the new inventions of fiscal genius.* They declared, that *the first of all laws was the law of property*; that *it was the inherent right of every nation who were not slaves*; and that *it would be to annihilate this sacred and unalienable right to consent to the establishment of any tax which was not granted by the nation.* They reflected upon themselves for having *authorized the raising of certain taxes.* They had *presumed too much on the love of the French for their Sovereign.* They had not sufficiently *considered the extent of a power which*

the King himself could not communicate to the Magistrates, as it belonged alone to the nation. It became the Court of Aides more than any other, to call for the States-General, on whose demand it had itself been created. All the Courts should hold the same language, for it was that of the nation. Who would dare to persuade the King, that to defend the interests of the people was to be an enemy to the Throne?

The King replied to the Court of Aides: "that "it belonged to him alone to judge, whether "circumstances required the States-General, and "that he had judged that they did not require "them; that he had done more good to his "people by the establishment of Provincial As-"semblies; and that it was his part to cause his "edicts to be registered, and to secure punc-"tuality to his engagements." Two days after, the Court of Aides declared in a new resolution: "that the Provincial Assemblies could not, any "more than the Courts, be considered as endued "with the power of the nation to consent to "taxes: that the Parliament having acknow-"ledged its incompetency, and the unalienable "right of the nation, could no longer undertake "to discuss what they had no right to consent "to."

Aug. 27. 1787. On the same day the Parliament of Paris, sitting at Troyes, filled by a new resolution the measure of all those to which they owed their banishment. They bound themselves *not to cease representing to the King, that the States-General alone could probe the wound of the state, heal it, and grant taxes.* "The French Monarchy," said they, "would "be led to despotism, if it were true that Ministers, abusing the King's authority, might "dispose of persons by *lettres de cachet*, of property by beds of justice, of civil and criminal "affairs by citations and reversals; if he had a "right to suspend the course of justice by the "banishment of individuals and arbitrary removals." Then the Parliament *persisted in all their principles*; applauded themselves for having *supported them with as much firmness and moderation as respect for the King's person*; *swore to watch unceasingly over the tranquillity of the subject, at the hazard even of their lives and fortunes*; and in order to prove that *respect*, as well as to maintain that *tranquillity*, they *enjoined the Procureur-General to cause the present resolution to be printed and sent in four-and-twenty hours to the bailiwicks and senechalships in the jurisdiction.*

The flame spread from the capital into the provinces. Bordeaux, Toulouse, Grenoble, and

Besançon signalised themselves. Some Parliaments went farther still than that of Paris. They not only proscribed the two financial edicts, but would not even admit of Provincial Assemblies. Meanwhile all kind of credit failed. The state of the finances daily grew worse. Not only the subsidies necessary to fill the known void were not established, but that void was increased by all the consequences of distrust and instability, by the falling of the funds, the restraint of trade, the stagnation of money, the terrors of ignorance, the manœuvres of stock-jobbing, and the intrigues of ambition.

The Government seemed willing to ſhew firmness. The Council by a vote, in which the consequences of the resolutions lately entered into by the Parliament of Paris were ably exposed, declared " that it was incumbent upon the King " to put an end to the scandal of such an abuse " of power." The resolutions were annulled as *contrary to law, encroaching on the King's authority, tending to withdraw the obedience due to him from the people, to whom the Parliaments should set the example of submission.* The officers of the Parliament of Paris were forbidden to give any effect, and the persons under their jurisdiction to pay any regard, to those resolutions, on pain of disobedience.

The Intendants of the Provinces within the jurisdiction of that Court received an order to attend strictly to the execution of the vote of the Council, which was delivered in to the register's office of the Parliament, sent to every bailiwick and senechalship within their jurisdiction, and published and stuck up throughout the kingdom. A few days before this solemn act of the Council, the Archbishop of Toulouse, to encrease his weight, and raise the idea of his credit, had prevailed upon the King to declare him in terms Prime Minister. At that period men, who afterwards forsook the Royal cause, concurred cordially in the strong measures, the object of which was to support it. From that time the seditious wanted to make the *Palais Royal* their rallying place. The Duke of Orléans had notice published and stuck up, that the privileges of the inhabitants within the precinct of his palace were suspended. He himself sent for troops to disperse the meetings there. He did more—he presented a memorial to the King, in which he requested him not to allow the good of his service, and the tranquillity of his state, to depend on the variable succession of Ministers, and the diversity of their characters, but to establish in each department a Council, whose permanence might ensure the stability of principles, and the conti-

nuance as well as the unity of operations. The King thanked the Duke of Orléans for his zeal, and soon after created two Councils, one for the War department, and the other for the Navy. What horrible fatality then, what spirit of crime and malediction could afterwards cause so disastrous a division where so salutary an union prevailed?

The Parliament of Paris were not free from uneasiness on hearing the order of the Council above-mentioned. They besides very soon became weary of their residence at Troyes, and gave ear to a negotiation. The Archbishop of Toulouse might have made it more favourable for the King; but in threatening he was afraid. He was also more solicitous to preserve his place than to fill it well. It seemed to him that the slightest appearance of peace should be seized without deliberation. The King withdrew pro- Sept. 19.
visionally the two financial edicts voted by the Notables, and the statesmen deemed his authority from that moment compromised. The Parliament of Paris registered provisionally the continuation of the two twentieths with more exactness in their collection, and the Provincial Parliaments reproached them for having violated the principles they had juſt professed. *You are as*

wise as Charles V. said the Parliament to the King, who had been led into so dangerous an imprudence. *I am content with your obedience*, replied the King to the Parliament, who even in registring the twentieths, repeated that *they persisted in all their resolutions*. However, on their return
Sept. 30. to Paris, the Parliament was ordered to adjourn for the vacation, and there was really a temporary tranquillity.

Of this calm, advantage was taken to extend a strict economy through all the branches of the public expence, and to give motion to the Provincial Assemblies; a truly valuable institution, had the fruits which from the very first it had begun to bear been suffered to ripen. An institution, in which were established property in all its rights, loyalty in all its nobleness, liberty with just restrictions, a salutary reciprocity of deference and regard between the orders of the State, union without confusion, and a civism that did not resemble the Saturnalia. An institution, by which the French received a political education, which, when completed, would have rendered them capable of all the good that public deliberations can produce, and preserved them from all the evil they can engender.

The vacation ended, and again the sources of discord opened. One Court objected to the establishment of the Provincial Assemblies, another to the continuation, a third to the exact collection of the twentieths, and a fourth rejected all. It was no longer only remonstrances and protests, but prohibitory resolutions, by which a Parliament forbade obedience to the King, on pain of disobedience. The Government adopted a grand measure. Louis XVI. went and held a Royal Sitting in the Parliament of Paris. He went to reply in person to the petitions which had been addressed to him from every quarter for the convocation of the States-General. He went to defend solemnly the principles of the Monarchy against this general attack of the Parliamentary league. In fine, he carried with him two edicts; the one ordaining, for the liberation of the State, and even for the execution of the reforms, successive loans, which, in the course of five years, were to amount to 420 millions; the other restoring to French Protestants those natural and civil rights, which should never have been taken from them. On these two grand acts of administration and legislation, the King wished to hear his Parliament himself; and he permitted the two edicts to be debated openly in his presence.

Nov. 19, 1787.

Now that the spirit of faction is ashamed of itself, and sees with affright the consequence of excesses which have been produced one by the other; when, with the calm of a reason and the conviction of an experience which have cost so dear, one re-peruses the truly admirable speech delivered in this Sitting, in the name of the King, by M. Lamoignon, the Keeper of the Seals, one cannot conceive how such nobleness, such frankness, wants so pressing, sacrifices so extended, and a patriotism so just, could have failed to disarm opposition. No doubt there was in this speech some maxims respecting the unlimited power of the Crown, which did not accord with the spirit of the moment. But these theoretic principles were transcribed, word for word, from the very registers of the Parliament before whom they were asserted, and in practice the King was come to put the strongest reins upon his authority. Thus it was said on principle, that the King *was accountable to God alone for the exercise of his supreme power*, while in fact the King engaged solemnly, *to cause an account of the finances to be published every year.* It was laid down, that *to the King alone belonged the right of judging whether the convocation of the States-General were useful and necessary or not*, yet the King promised to make that convocation *before the end of five years*; and to gua-

rantee the execution of this promise, he limited to five years the continuation of the twentieths, as well as the successive loans he had just caused to be registered. The King, when he left the assembly of the Notables, had announced annual reforms to the amount of 40 millions; the Keeper of the Seals laid before the Parliament, article by article, an account of upwards of 50, and gave room to hope for more still. All that the good, the virtuous Louis XVI. asked, was a little time to prepare himself for so grand a measure as the renewal of the States-General, after an interruption of 175 years; it was that he might not present himself to the National Assembly till he was able *to communicate to them all he would have done for their happiness, and to render it lasting.* " It will," said Lamoignon, " be in the midst of the States-
" General of his kingdom that his Majesty, sur-
" rounded by his faithful subjects, will be able to
" present to them with confidence the cheering
" view of order established in the finances, agri-
" culture and commerce reciprocally encouraged
" under the auspices of liberty, a formidable navy,
" the army regenerated by a constitution more
" economical and more military, abuses abolished,
" a new port raised in the channel, to secure the
" glory of the French flag, laws amended, pub-
" lic education brought to perfection and flou-

" rishing, the comfort of the people rising from
" the noble sacrifices of the Sovereign; in short,
" all the establishments destined to render the
" different improvements which cannot but per-
" petuate in this empire public felicity, inde-
" pendent of men, and stable as the law."

This the Parliament of Paris did not choose to grant to the King, who came himself to ask it of them: and it is their conduct on this occasion, that will be regarded by posterity as the unpardonable guilt of that Court. Till then they might excuse their resistance by pretences more or less plausible. But when they had themselves in writing acknowledged that the reforms were taking place; when they were shown that the performance far exceeded the promise made; when the King engaged to convoke the States-General, so much called for, within five years; when, as a security for his engagement, he produced a system of finance confined to the term of five years, both as to the taxes and loans; in short, when the Parliament themselves had it in their power to add to this pledge as many restraining clauses as could be dictated by suspicion, ill or well founded, of the faith of the Prime Minister, wilfully to determine, under such circumstances, to exhaust the public treasury, an-

nihilate credit, inflame the passions of the people, constrain the King to enter suddenly on a contest with a formidable Assembly, in the excess of fermentation, without having it in his power to employ the least time in preparing and calming the public mind, was the most fatal blindness that ever men united in a body could be struck with: we should have used a different expression, did not repentance and misfortune demand indulgence towards those who, after being guilty of so great an error, became in so deplorable a manner the victims of it.

It is but just to own that, at this Sitting, the Government committed a great fault. After the points had been openly debated before the King, and all the opinions stated, it appeared evident, that the majority was for registering simply the two edicts brought by the King. When the time came for counting the votes, the Keeper of the Seals suddenly observed, that it was a principle that votes were not to be counted wherever the Sovereign was, and every opinion delivered in his presence was merely deliberative. The King himself spoke, and saying that he was sufficiently informed, ordered the edicts to be registered. A confused murmur immediately ran through the Assembly. Not only the opposition, but many

of those who were ready to vote for the government, complained of a subversion of forms. The first Prince of the Blood joined these. Whether it was that he inherited that spirit of independence and prepossession in favour of liberty which had distinguished his ancestor; or that he amused himself with being under Louis XVI. the head of the Parliamentary opposition, as the late Prince de Conti had done under Louis XV; or, in short, that court jealousies and intrigues, of which he thought he had reason to complain, had seriously soured him, the Duke of Orléans asked, whether it was a Royal Sitting or a Bed of Justice which was now held? On the Keeper of the Seals replying that it was a Royal Sitting, the Prince maintained that the votes ought to be counted. This was again denied, and the Duke of Orléans demanded that it should be inserted on the register, that it had been done *by the express command of the King*. This was refused, and the Duke without hesitation said, "that it only "remained for him to protest against the ille-"gality with which this sitting had been termi-"nated."

It remains uncertain whether this rigorous exercise of a prerogative, disputed at so difficult a juncture, proceeded from the King himself, or

from his Council. But it is certain that if the votes had been counted according to the usual form, it might have been taken advantage of in future against the Royal Prerogative, whatever the result of it might have been. Had the majority declared against the edicts, the Government would have been obliged to resort to the principle of right, and the King to pronounce the deliberation null; and had the majority been in favour of them, the Parliament would have concluded from their being thus adopted, that the votes made the decree, even in the King's presence. It was therefore judged a duty to enforce the prerogative strictly, and it is painful to think that a mere difficulty of form has perhaps involved the world in misery.

The King withdrew, but the Parliament continued sitting. The Duke of Orléans was requested to make his protest in writing, and was not long about it. A great majority joined in it, and a resolution of the Chambers assembled was passed in these terms: "THE COURT, considering the illegality of what has just passed at the "King's Sitting, in which the votes were not "collected, counted, and voted, in the manner "prescribed by the ordinances, so that the deli-

" beration was not complete; *declare*, that they " take no part in the transcription ordered and " made on their registers of the edict for the five " years gradual and successive loan, and that as " to *the rest* they adjourn the debate to to-mor- " row."

The rest was the second edict, the object of which we have mentioned, a law which had been so long called for by reason, justice and humanity, and which, though it could not heal the wound given to France by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, softened at least the melancholy effects of it, gave all the Protestants remaining in the empire a civil state, and must, it should seem, have conciliated them to the paternal authority of Louis XVI. It was to be the misfortune of the Parliament to resist even this edict, as it was to be that of Louis XVI. to find himself punished for this act of goodness.

It was doubtless impossible that the King should suffer a proceeding to exist, by which the Parliament discredited a loan indispensable for the preservation of the State; and no man in his senses ought to have been surprised at hearing, the very next day, that the King had summoned

the grand deputation of the Parliament with their registers. But the Prime Minister, who seemed resolved to show himself severe, only to prove himself weak, adopted inconsiderately that odious tyranny which punishes individually the liberty of suffrages in a body constituted by the law to deliberate. He caused two Magistrates to be taken up by *lettres de cachet*, and sent them to different prisons. By a third order of the same nature, the Duke of Orléans was confined to his estate at Rainci.

Thanks to this last enterprise of the Ministry, the Parliament, who could before only have appeared at Versailles as accused, to suffer the erasure of their registers, now appeared as accusers, denouncing illegal imprisonment or exile, and demanding the immediate liberty of two of their members, and that of the first Prince of the blood. The King began by causing the resolution of the day before to be erased from the registers, and expressly forbade its being replaced in any manner. *How can my Parliament*, said he to the deputies, *pretend not to have taken any part in the registering of my edicts, which I did not order till after I had attended to their debates and opinions for seven hours? It is evident*, added he, *to every body as well as myself, that the majority of the votes were*

for registering my edicts, adding supplications to hasten the convocation of the States-General of my kingdom. Here the King repeated *that he would convoke them at the latest in* 1791, and that *his word was sacred.* He insisted that, in *having thought proper to hold his Council in the midst of his Parliament,* he did not engage *to submit himself to rules that applied only to tribunals in the usual exercise of their functions.* As for the Prince and the two Magistrates, whose liberty was demanded, all the reply the King gave was, that *he had punished two Magistrates with whom he had cause to be displeased,* and that *when he determined to show marks of displeasure to a Prince of his blood, he did not owe an account of his reasons to his Parliament.*

From these last words, and from the acts of authority which had occasioned them, there arose not only a new contest, in addition to so many others, but a debate the most dangerous from its nature and consequences; a debate, not on the use but on the very existence of the *lettres de cachet*; a claim, not of any particular right belonging to the exiled Prince and the imprisoned Magistrates, but of the universal right, inherent in 24 millions of Frenchmen; a struggle, in short, in which all advantage could not fail to be on the side of the Parliament. In vain did the Ministers

insist on *the honour of families*, in vain did they circulate a statement of the number of *lettres de cachet*, issued within a given time, to shew that most of them had been solicited by members of sovereign courts; it was replied on every hand, that it was puerile to oppose the private actions of some Magistrates to the legal claims of the whole Magistracy; that general order and private security were objects sacred in a very different manner from what, by an abuse of words and a perversion of ideas, was called *the honour of families*; that security should be the portion of innocence, and punishment the meed of guilt; that a virtuous family had to weep, but not to blush, if one of their members proved unworthy of them; and that the whole society had to tremble if clandestine arbitrary orders, divested of all legal forms, and superior to all control, could violate domestic asylum, and even the sanctuary of justice, drag a citizen from his family, a magistrate from his functions, deprive the law of its organ, the wretched of their patron, and the oppressed of their defender.

One of the fatal consequences of this ministerial error was, that the popularity which the Parliaments acquired by their denunciation of *lettres de cachet* covered the excesses into which,

in other respects, they continued to plunge: while the Prime Minister was for doing every thing at once, to gain at least some favour for some part of his administration, the Parliaments thwarted him in all, that he might not attain that popularity which they wanted to keep exclusively for themselves, in order to make use of it against him. So Louis XVI. much more truly religious than any of his censurers, was pretty nearly accused in the assembled Chambers of Paris of forgetting, and called upon *to maintain, the religion of his forefathers and of the kingdom,* because he did not think himself justified in refusing the enjoyment of natural and civil rights to Christians differing from him on some points of their creed. It was not till after an assault of remonstrances and repeated injunctions, till after having tried what the absurd clamours of fanaticism, and the sordid calculations of revenue could effect against so just a law *, that the sanction of re-

* It was proposed, as a condition of the registering the edict, that the property of the religionists which had been confiscated should be restored to their heirs, to which the King made this remarkable reply: "I will consider what is to be done respecting the restitution of the property of the religionists "without disturbing possessions protected by *length of time* "and *good faith*. My edict shows this intention, which can "have no effect till after the registering."

gistering was granted to this wish of the King, which was the wish of all good men.

The formation of the Provincial Assemblies, and the collection of the public revenue, daily experienced new difficulties in the provinces. The right of agreeing to taxes was denied to the States of Languedoc by the Parliament of Toulouse, and to those of Bretagne by the Parliament of Rennes. The Parliament of Metz, enjoined the assembly of the Trois Evêchés not to subscribe to any composition. That of Grenoble, following the example of that of Bordeaux; expressly prevented the execution of the King's edicts by prohibitory ordinances, and the whole machine of administration in Dauphiné was suddenly stopped. It was impossible that so much insubordination and disorder, so many obstacles raised by self-will to what was so evidently the general interest, should not at last have convinced men's minds of the necessity of a bold and decisive measure, and have given the government the whole weight of public opinion, had not the denunciation of *lettres de cachet*, the idea of arbitrary imprisonment always so odious, and the name of personal liberty always so powerful, formed a kind of talisman, which rendered the repeated transgressions of the Courts

invisible, shewed only the fair side of their conduct, and gained them the general voice. The Parliament of Paris renewed the famous resolution which the King had annulled, by forbidding all those concerned in passing it to give it any effect, on pain of disobedience. The counsellors of the Monarch were not afraid to announce publicly, "THAT THE MONARCHY WAS DEGENERATING "INTO DESPOTISM. That the fears of the Court, "manifested by their resolution of the 27th of "August, had proved but too real. That the "same power which arbitrarily disposed of the "person of a Prince of the blood and of two "Magistrates, could *à fortiori* dispose of all the "other citizens. That the Court neither could "nor would separate the cause of this Prince and "those Magistrates from that of the King's other "subjects. That therefore they would not cease "demanding at the same time for the Duke of "Orléans and the two Magistrates their liberty, "or a trial, and for all Frenchmen the security "due to them from the Government, as promised "by the laws."

What was to be opposed to such language? This declaration was warmly received by the public enthusiasm, which was still more inflamed by it. The Parliament of the capital was echoed

by those of the great provinces. For four months all France resounded with remonstrances, resolutions, and all kinds of clamour, demanding imperiously the repeal of the Prince's banishment, the liberty of the imprisoned Magistrates, the abolition of *lettres de cachet*; and even, at that time, some voices were heard calling for the destruction of the Bastille and other state prisons. The King's answers, adopted in the Council, were not in union with his sentiments and actions. It was certainly an odd circumstance, and a strange inconsistency, to have brought things to such a point, or to defend the theory of *lettres de cachet* by the mouth of the King, who, in practice, justly boasted *of having made a more moderate use of them than any of his predecessors*; and who, from time to time, had gradually more and more narrowed the limits of the exercise of this power. But in authority there are many men who, even though they do not embrace the execrable system of never counting justice as any thing, find it yet convenient to have the power of overleaping it when they please. The Prime Minister too calculated that he should soon have occasion for rigorous measures. He meditated a complete change in the general administration of the whole kingdom, expected resistance, was acquainted with no other means of overcoming it, and, alas!

did not even know how to make use of the only one he was acquainted with.

It must be allowed, that those who were most violent in condemning the great innovation, the period of which we are approaching, did all they could to justify it. We shall not be afraid of entering here into details, though sensible that some readers may find part of them unnecessary. We write for those who are either not at all or ill informed. Party-spirit delights to trace history at ease; it examines, recapitulates, and decides according to its passions or its calculations, with that brevity which puts investigation aside, and suits arbitrariness. Truth at present prescribes a different method for whoever would raise a monument to her. In our days it is not enough to write history, it is necessary to prove it.

Towards the month of April 1788, the Government, true to their engagement of giving an annual account of the finances, announced that they were going to publish a state of the receipts and expences of the year. The gross amount had already found its way to the public. The disproportion of the ordinary revenue to the total charges of this year was a hundred and sixty millions. This deficit was not only to be covered,

but exceeded seven millions, by the presumed produce of the successive loans, and by the savings realized from the promised reforms. These, which we have seen computed at fifty millions for the second year, were in this very first account completed to the value of thirty-six, and notice was given of a new progression by which they would amount to a hundred and two millions for the year 1792, the period fixed for the convocation of the States-General. M. Lambert, then Comptroller-General of the Finances, who had been long a distinguiſhed Member of the Parliament of Paris, possessing with every moral and religious virtue, profound knowledge and admirable method, M. Lambert had to this stated account affixed the seal of his labour and integrity. The design was to tranquillize as well as to inform the public. While the right of issuing *lettres de cachet* was maintained, those against the Duke of Orléans and the two Magistrates had in fact been revoked. The former was entirely at liberty; the two others were released from prison, and permitted to go to their estates. A laudable emulation was seen throughout the different departments. The Count de Brienne, with the Council of War, and the Count de la Luzerne, with that of the Navy, attended unremittingly to business, and though the utility of some of

the objects of it might be doubtful, the whole certainly proved zeal and integrity. The Keeper of the Seals, assisted by the talents and virtues of that other Lamoignon, whose name can never be mentioned without grief and respect, laboured indefatigably on the reform so necessary in the criminal law, and on the improvement so desired in public education. He had already begun to associate the Parliament of Paris in his noble labours, by requesting them to appoint a Committee, to unite in the examination and discussion of the plans for new laws. One of the first *declarations of the King*, of the utmost importance to the rights of the citizen, and for the protection of the innocent, had already been sent to the Chambers assembled. The Baron de Breteuil attended to the embellishment of Paris, but to one of a useful kind, and not burdensome. He cleared the bridges of the old cumbrous unwholesome buildings with which they were crowded; restored circulation and salubrity to the air; insulated the hospitals, enriched them, and built new ones; and, in short, accomplished the wish nearest the King's heart, by taking care of the poor with close attention. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, a well-informed and amiable man, of a penetrating, mild, and conciliating mind, and who proved in the sequel, that to

M. de Malesherbes.

these he added courage, the Count de Montmorin, preserved peace abroad, which was on the point of being disturbed by the disputes of Holland. It is now a question, whether the success which then awaited his abilities is not to be regretted; whether the threatening course of sedition would not have been diverted, by suddenly turning the public attention to an employment as irresistible as immediate; and whether those Parliaments who refused every subsidy to the demand of the Ministers, accompanied with the grounds of it, would not have yielded to the impressions and alarming cry of war. Whatever be the true solution of this question, raised like so many others after the event, certain it is that, at the time, the state of the finances made the Government shudder at the idea of a single campaign. The mere shew of a camp, which was to be formed at Givet, could not be accomplished. Peace alone was desired, it was obtained, and it should seem that the general view we have just taken ought to have recalled public credit to the aid of the finances, the only diseased part of the administration.

Of a sudden, as if they feared that this credit would heal the numberless wounds they had given, the assembled Chambers of the Parliament

of Paris took it into their heads to send to the King, on the 13th of April 1788, remonstrances on the Royal Sitting of the 19th of Nov. 1787, repeating, that *the Parliament had had no part in registering the loans as ordered at that Sitting*, and that *those loans were illegal.*

Some days after this one of the *Gentlemen* denounced the enquiries that the Comptrollers of the Twentieths were making, in order to assess the rate of those who had not compounded for the tax. The Parliament received the denunciation, and resolved, the resolution itself must be read to be believed, that *the progressive augmentation of the Twentieths ought not to follow the progressive augmentation of the revenue,* which was as much as to say, that the twentieth ought not to be the twentieth; and ordered *that an inquiry should be made into the existence and conduct of the Comptrollers,* and that *the Attorney-General should report the same within one month.*

April 29, 1787.

The money-lenders feared that they should be ruined, and the Comptrollers that they should be hanged; the loans were not filled, the tax was not collected.

Meanwhile the fermentation continued in all the other Parliaments, and daily encreased in

violence. The general question on *lettres de cachet* outlived the release of the persons who had suffered awhile by them. Several provinces remained without the advantage of a Provincial Assembly, because a Court of Justice had forbidden them the enjoyment of it, and because a gift made by the King to his people had been stopped by his Judges. Parliament wrote to Parliament to encourage one another in resistance; some of them wrote to the Sovereign, to declare to him that they would not obey him, and to call upon him to assemble the States-General immediately. They agreed on one point, and disagreed on another. When a Commandant, or a Commissioner of the King's entered one of these Courts to have an edict registered, the members all disappeared, leaving the Commandant alone with the Clerk and the Chief President. As soon as the law was registered, and the Commandant gone, back flew all the Members to declare the registering null. The roads were covered with *grand deputations* of the Parliaments, going to Versailles to see their registers defaced by their King's hand, and returning to the country to fill a new page with a new resolution, more audacious than that which had been annulled. The more incendiary these acts, and the more they breathed rebellion, the more eagerly were they published, to an

alarming extent. The impossibility of governing was rapidly approaching. The Prime Minister, possessing in vain the entire confidence of the King, having obtained with his master an excess of credit, at which he said he was frightened himself, was on the point of finding himself destitute of every kind of power. He had to struggle against nature as well as men. A bad constitution, old infirmities, a weak head, and blood inflamed by labour and vexation, brought him to death's door every week. His physicians were continually forbidding him to attend to any business whatever, yet he persisted in bearing the weight of all. It was in a state so deplorable, it was under this natural and moral weakness, that the Archbishop of Toulouse, then become Archbishop of Sens, had in contemplation to effect, at the same instant, throughout France a change which had to encounter such obstacles as would have required the union of a Minister as powerful as Richelieu, with a King as submissive in council and as brave in action as Louis XIII.

All the Commandants and Intendants of Provinces were ordered to repair to their posts, there to wait for instructions which they should all receive on the same day, and to execute them without attempting the slightest alteration. At

Versailles sentinels were seen placed at the door and every window of the Royal Printing-Office.

None of the workmen employed there were suffered to go out: they slept in the house, and had their food brought to them. A Bed of Justice was announced to be held very soon, and that it was to be very solemn. It was said that the Royal Authority and the interest of the people should be avenged at once, and that the root of all Parliamentary insurrections should be cut at a single blow. A general anxiety pervaded the higher classes of society, and was particularly felt by the Magistrates.

One of those Magistrates, of whom we have already spoken; a man, who wanted neither talents, knowledge, nor courage, but so hot-headed, so inflamed with the desire of celebrity, so infatuated with the chimerical pretensions of his corps; a man, who was doomed to be successively the calumniator of Nobility and Royalty, then the pernicious flatterer of one and the other, and then the deplorable victim of his excesses in all senses, the Counsellor d'Epremesnil, succeeded in corrupting the wife of one of the workmen shut up in the Royal Printing-House, and by her, her husband. He received several printed sheets in

a kind of earthen ball, and became acquainted with some of the clauses of the edicts to be produced.

Scarce had he these sheets in his hands when he ran to the house of the Chief President, requested that the Chambers should be assembled, denounced to them all he knew of the ministerial projects, and made a motion for an oath, by which all the Members should bind themselves not *to authorize any innovation, and not to take a place in any assembly that should not be the Parliament itself, composed of the same persons, and invested with the same rights.* This oath was taken; and served as a prelude to that in the *Tennis-Court*, which was to follow eleven months after. A declaration was drawn up, which in like manner was a prelude to *the declaration of rights*, and in which the Parliament did not fail to bring forward the popular question of personal liberty. They placed among *the rights of the nation*, that *of granting subsidies freely through the medium of the States-General*; and among *the rights of a citizen, that without which all others are useless, the not being liable to be arrested by any order whatever, but to be brought without delay before competent judges.* The cause of the magistracy was combined with that of the nation. "It was for having resisted two disastrous taxes,

Oath of the Parliament May 3, 1788.

" for having acknowledged themselves incom-
" petent to consent to subsidies, for having soli-
" cited the convocation of the States-General,
" and for having claimed personal liberty for the
" citizens, that the Court was to be the first to
" fall under the blows that menaced the nation:
" The object of such enterprises was evidently
" to cover the old dissipations without convening
" the States-General. The system of the *sole will*
" was clearly expressed, and there remained no
" resource for the nation but a formal declaration
" made by the Court." The Peers attended the sitting, and both the declaration and oath passed unanimously.

When he heard what had passed, the Prime Minister felt a resentment, easily to be conceived, in which his colleagues shared. The success of the measures adopted depended chiefly on the secrecy with which they were to be conducted, till the very moment of their being made known in the Bed of Justice. The King was extremely offended. He declared, " that he observed with pain,
" that while he was making sacrifices, even greater
" than had been hoped, the Parliaments were
" doing all they could to thwart in every way
" measures for the success of which tranquillity

" and confidence were necessary, and were en-
" deavouring, under the vain pretence of pub-
" lic rumour, to spread alarm through the na-
" tion." By the order of the Council in which this declaration of the King was inserted, the resolution entered into the day before by the Parliament of Paris was annulled, with a *prohibition*, so often braved, *of entering into similar ones in future on pain of disobedience.* As for the Counsellor d'Eprémesnil, who had been the cause of that sitting, and of the resolutions taken in it, a secret order was given to arrest him, as well as one of his colleagues named Goëslard, who had aided him in his manœuvre, and imitated his passion.

Certainly it was not possible to assimilate to the *lettres de cachet*, by which, the year before, the liberty of voting in a regular meeting had been violated, an order issued against two Magistrates, who, after having themselves violated, by a criminal corruption, the secret of the Government, had gone to raise their colleagues against the Prince whose officers they were, and by arguing from some detached fragments, to prevail on them to enter into the rash engagement of resisting laws with which they were not yet acquainted. Would d'Eprémesnil, who, to arrogate the right of sum-

moning before his Court the heads of the army and of the French Nobility, had so often admitted of indefinite misdemeanors, crimes by affinity, and treasons in fact though not so in intention; would d'Eprémesnil, who was then in an evident state of rebellion against the King's authority, have had a right to complain if his own weapons had been turned against himself, and if those words had been applied to him which were formerly addressed to the Chancellor Poyet by his judges, when from being an oppressor he became oppressed: *allow that to be done to you which you have done to others. Be judged by the maxims which you have established?**

But then, the Prime Minister had no power to punish, while he had the folly to irritate: the order given was a *lettre de cachet*, the very sound of which, in the inflamed state of men's minds, excited transports of indignation: and the fatality, which from that moment seemed to await all the measures of Government, prevented the execution of this first order, and, instead of a simple arrest without noise, produced a public affray, a military execution, and the investing of the *Palais de Justice* by an army.

* *Patere legem quam ipse tuleris.*

The two Magistrates were to have been arrested at home at day-break, and the officers did in fact go to their houses. How both of them happened to escape, is difficult to comprehend, without suspecting collusion in the chief of the Police, who, it is well known, belonged to the Magistracy. However this was, d'Eprémesnil in the livery of one of his servants, and Goëslard disguised some other way, hastened to take refuge in the *Palais*, where, having put on their judge's robes, they denounced to the Chief President the plot formed against their persons. In an hour's time the Parliament was convened, the Chambers assembled, the Peers sent for, and the two threatened Magistrates placed *under the protection of the law.* The Parliament then resolved to send a deputation immediately to the King at Versailles, and to continue sitting till their deputies returned.

They came back to say that the King had refused to receive them, had sent them word that he would be obeyed, and ordered the two Magistrates to surrender themselves prisoners. It was instantly resolved to send a new deputation, and furthermore, that the sitting should continue all night, and that the Court should persevere in encircling and defending by their presence those

Members who, it was intended, should be taken from them.

In the night the Magistrates, from the place of their sitting, heard first a confused noise, and soon after the trampling of horses and the clattering of arms. The *Palais* was invested by detachments of the French and Swiss guards, and one of cavalry. The two threatened Magistrates had recourse to their morning disguises, in which they attempted, but in vain, to escape. They were obliged to resume their robes, and return to their places. The avenues, passages, and halls of the *Palais* were all soon occupied. The doors of the great Chamber were locked: but on the Major of the French guards ordering pioneers to advance, and threatening to beat them in, they were thrown open.

This officer was distinguished by extreme firmness. Sprung from an ancient family, and full of the idea of his ancestors, he was much more disposed to push the principles of honour to an excess than to forget them for a moment. He once thought himself affronted by a Prince of the blood, upon which he every where put himself in his way in so marked a manner as to make him understand that he dared to demand satisfaction:

the Prince was generous enough to guess the challenge and accept it; the grandson of the great Condé fought a duel with the Marquis d'Agout. It was not in the nature of such a man to become, as was said in those times of exaggeration, the vile instrument of ministerial despotism; but, as the servant of the King, he thought it his duty to obey the moment his Majesty commanded. Struck, on entering the great Chamber, with the awful sight of a hundred and fifty Magistrates and seventeen Peers of France, who, preserving a profound silence, showed on their countenances the expression of grief and indignation, the Marquis d'Agout said he was sorry to be charged with the execution of rigorous orders, but that those orders must be obeyed, and that it behoved Messrs. d'Eprémesnil and Goëslard to deliver themselves up to him. He was asked if he distinguished them among the Magistrates whom he saw assembled. He replied, that he did not know them. He was then told, "that if they were present "they could not escape him, as the Hall was "every where surrounded; that the Court of the "Peers were occupied in consulting; that they "expected a return of the deputation sent to the "King, and that he was required to withdraw "till the consultation was finished, and the result "of the deputation known." On this he retired.

The government continued inflexible. The second deputation returned, like the firſt, without seeing the King. The Marquis d'Agout received freſh orders, entered the great Chamber again, and called upon the Magistrate near whom he stood to show him M. d'Eprémesnil. On the Magistrate replying that he was no informer against his colleague, the Major conjured the Court not to reduce him to a shocking extremity, between the respect he wished to shew to the Parliament, and the duty he owed to the King. It is said that on this some young Counsellors formed a group, keeping the two culprits in the centre. A Magistrate, not so young and less violent, observed, that if he were one of the two persons called upon to surrender, he should not think it justifiable to involve the whole Parliament on his own account. This ungenerous remark was caught generously by d'Eprémesnil. He broke through the ranks that surrounded him, and naming himself, set an example to Goëslard, which was followed. Before he went out, he bade adieu to the Parliament in a bold and pathetic address, deploring the loss of public liberty, the degradation of the magistracy, and the profanation of the sanctuary of the laws. Praying to Heaven that he might be the sole victim of ministerial despotism, both he and his unfortu-

nate companion tore themselves from the embraces and tears of their colleagues, and left the great Chamber. Two Police-officers attended, and conducted them to different carriages in which they were to be conveyed, one to the Isles St. Marguerite, and the other to Pierre-en-Cyse. In crossing the Court-yard of the *Palais*, and on the step of the carriage, d'Eprémesnil attempted to stir up the people. He asked them how they could suffer their Magistrates to be treated in this manner? Some indistinct shouts were here and there heard, but there was not the shadow of commotion. The author of this narration remembers to have been led that day to the *Palais* by the desire of observing events which were acquiring so much importance. He heard some young men, who were far from belonging to the class commonly called *the people*, ask the French guards, who were under arms, if, in case an attempt were made to deliver the Parliament, they would fire upon their fellow-citizens; and he heard the soldier constantly reply: *I would fire on my friend, I would fire on my brother, if I received an order to do it.*

When the two Magistrates were removed, the Marquis d'Agout fulfilled the rest of his instructions. The Members of the Parliament were

enjoined, in the King's name, to separate: they obeyed, filing off in their robes, between two ranks of soldiers, and the Major locked the doors of the *Palais*, and took away the keys.

The very next day the Parliament received an order to repair to Versailles on the following day, to attend the Bed of Justice that had been so much talked of. Before they left Paris the Chambers met at the *Palais*, and renewed their engagement to consider as a nullity all that was going to take place at Versailles.

Bed of Justice, May 8, 1788.

The King, who, even from the consciousness of his pure intentions, was but the more unhappy at the opposition, and the more hurt at the injustice he experienced, opened the sitting with a concise and severe speech, delivered in a voice of deep sorrow. He said, "that for a year past "the Parliament of Paris, whose example had "been followed by the Parliaments of the Pro- "vinces, had given themselves up to every kind "of offence: that the consequence of their en- "terprises had been, a stop to the execution of "important and desirable laws, a languor in "measures of the most valuable nature, a stag- "nation of credit, and an interruption or sus- "pension of justice; in short, they had even

" shaken the social edifice and public tranquillity:
" and that he owed it to his people, to himself,
" and to his successors, to repress such perver-
" sions."

So far it was impossible to deny a single word that the King had said, either as to the facts and consequences he complained of, or in respect to the idea he had of his duty. Proceeding to the remedy, after having exposed the evil, the King announced: " that though he had with regret been
" compelled to punish some Magistrates, he pre-
" ferred preventing such excesses, to repressing
" them. That he did not wish to destroy his
" Parliaments, but to recal them to their duty,
" and the nature of their institution. That it
" was his intention to convert a critical juncture
" into a salutary epocha for his subjects; to begin
" the reformation of jurisprudence by that of the
" Courts of Justice; to procure suitors speedier
" and less expensive justice; to restore to the
" nation the exercise of their legitimate rights,
" which must ever accord with those of the
" Sovereign; that it was his wish above all to
" give to every part of the monarchy that con-
" nexion and unity of views, without which a
" great kingdom is weakened even by the num-
" ber of its provinces." He added, " that the

" order which he had now established was not " new—that there was a single Parliament at the " time when Philip le Bel rendered it stationary " at Paris—that a great State required one King, " one law, and one registry; Courts of a juris- " diction of moderate extent, charged with the " cognizance of the greatest number of causes; " Parliaments for the most important ones; a " single Court to be the depository of the laws " common to all the kingdom; and, lastly, States- " General, to be assembled, not once but as often " as the necessities of the State required it. *Such,*" said the King in concluding, " *is the restoration* " *my love for my subjects has prepared, and which it* " *this day consecrates for their happiness.*" He then commanded the Keeper of the Seals to detail more at large his intentions.

Lamoignon, who, on this memorable day, spoke five times, began by causing three edicts to be promulged, the general utility of which admitted no doubt, even allowing, with those who wished to attribute a corrupt motive to them, that they were framed more with a view to injure the Parliaments than to benefit the nation.

The first of these edicts, relative to the administration of justice, did in fact render it less

expensive, more speedy, and more sure. The *Siéges Présidiaux*, a kind of inferior Courts, for the creation of which Henry II. was blessed by the people in 1551, and which were then authorized to decide without appeal all causes to the amount of 250 livres, were declared by the new edict, according to the encreased value of money, competent to decide, without appeal, every suit of which the sum in question did not exceed 4000 livres. Forty-five grand Bailiwicks, distributed with due proportion over the districts of the different Parliaments, were empowered, in civil affairs, to decide definitively to the value of twenty-thousand livres; and in criminal matters to determine, without appeal, the sentences passed on the trial of every person not privileged. In either case, an appeal lay from the *Siéges Présidiaux* to the grand Bailiwicks. The Parliaments remained judges of extraordinary matters, State-questions, and all criminal charges brought against ecclesiastics, noblemen, officers of justice, and other privileged persons.

The quantity of business hitherto crowded into each Parliament being thus lightened, by the distribution made of it among the new jurisdictions, it was clear that in the old sovereign Courts so great a number of officers was no more necessary.

The Parliament of Paris was reduced to a great Chamber, a Chamber *de Tournelle* for criminal matters, and a single one of *Requests*, formed altogether of seventy-three Counsellors and nine Presidents. The three other Chambers were suppressed; and the impetuous youth, of whom they were composed, had only to chuse either to be reimbursed the purchase-money of their places, if they preferred it, or to be admitted successively into the Chambers reserved, as the seats became vacant: besides, in future, no candidate could apply for patents of admission to the rank of a Counsellor of the Parliament, without having served at least four years in a grand Bailiwick. No one could be a Counsellor before he had completed his twenty-fifth year, nor have a voice on the Bench before thirty. Lastly, the Courts of Exception, so long and so justly the objects of censure, were all suppressed. These different provisions were the topics of the second edict.

The third new law, promulged under the title of *the King's Declaration*, granted the prayer of the voices, it might be said the cries, which had long been heard in every part of France, beseeching a reform of the criminal code and proceedings. It is painful to say, but true, that in the course of the thirty preceding years, the mistakes, and

too frequently the passions, of the judges had produced scenes of iniquity and barbarity that had created indignation and horror in every mind. Men long oppressed had in the end overcome their oppressors in a signal manner. Illustrious victims had left behind them religious avengers. Obscure unfortunate persons had met with generous patrons. In vain had the prejudices of a collective body, a vanity both puerile and cruel, an unconquerable spirit of pride, of tyranny, and of hatred, armed themselves with all their power to stifle the groans, and to punish the protectors of innocence. Those groans had but resounded the more; those protectors had but become the more devoted to the cause they had embraced. Philosophy, which in such a course ran no risk of bewildering itself, had lent its support to the victims, that is to say, to humanity itself. From the bosom of the very Magistracy it was common to see great men appearing to denounce its barbarous courses; the Servans, Niondars, Morveaus, (a name at that time pure) the Argis, Catelaus, and a long *et ceteri*, including that Du Paty, whose memoirs were condemned to be burnt, just as they had saved three innocent persons from the rack. In every quarter it was demanded that the proceedings in criminal causes should be public; that every person accused should be allowed

a counsellor to defend his life and honour; that a respect to innocence, which was always to be presumed till condemnation, should secure from outrage those impeached, who might perhaps appear entitled to reparation from justice; that even a criminal condemned should not be delivered up to arbitrary punishments; that the rack before death should be suppressed, as it had been before sentence; that the Judges should be obliged to specify the crime which they punished, and that no more judgments of death might be seen *for cases stated in the proceedings*; lastly, that an interval should be allowed between condemnation and death; and that when a sentence of death, declared null by the law, was to be reversed, it should be done before the man illegally condemned was deprived of his life, which could not be restored to him. Such were the objects proposed, such the wishes almost all complied with, in the third law, or the King's Declaration.

Proceeding from the administration of justice to the forms of legislation, to that great change, which was, it cannot be denied, a complete revolution in the French Government, Lamoignon set out with shewing what was to be noticed in that sole and supreme Court which the King had announced. It had, no doubt, been disused in

late times, but was no innovation either in the annals, or public law of the French Monarchy. The King was only re-establishing that superior tribunal which formerly existed, that Plenary Court which two French Monarchs, one of whom was surnamed *the Wise*, had defined *the assembly of the Feudal Lords and of the Barons, the Court of the Barons and of the Peers, the universal Parliament, the capital justice of France, the only image of Sovereign Majesty, the ancient source of all the justice of the kingdom, and the principal council of the Kings.*

This Plenary Court was to be composed of the Chancellor or Keeper of the Seals of France, and of the whole grand Chamber of the Parliament of Paris, in which should sit the Princes of the blood, the Peers of the kingdom, the great officers of the Crown, Prelates, Mareschals of France, Governors of provinces, other personages equally qualified, ten Counsellors of State or Masters of Requests, two Magistrates of the Chamber of Accounts of Paris, two of the Court of Aids, and a deputy from each Provincial Parliament. All the members of the Plenary Court were to hold their seats for life. The King was to be President, and in his absence the Chancellor or Keeper of the Seals, and for want of them, the Chief or another President of the Parliament of Paris.

The usual Sittings were to be held in the Grand-Chamber of that Parliament, and the Sessions were to last from the 1st of December to the 1st of April.

The King again renewed his promise, already repeated, of assembling the States-General before the year 1792. He engaged to impose no new tax till that time; or if, in that short interval, War, or any unforeseen necessity, should require an extraordinary aid, he would ask of the Plenary Court only to register his edicts provisionally. The grand object of this supreme Court was not the verification and promulgation of local laws peculiar to any jurisdiction; in those cases all the Courts respectively retained the right of registering and remonstrating, but exclusively to verify, register, and remonstrate, in every case of a general law, concerning the administration of the kingdom. Experience, said Lamoignon, has lately taught us more than ever the value of union, and the necessity for restoring this ancient institution. In vain had the King, in compliance with the national desire, which was expressed so long ago as the States-General of 1614, endeavoured *to remove all the marks of division by which the provinces of the same empire were separated:* in vain had the Notables lately thanked him for it: the

execution of his beneficent views, and the accomplishment of the wish of the nation, every where met with difficulties incessantly renewed. Neither the establishment of the Provincial Assemblies, the freedom of the corn-trade, the abolition of the Corvée personally, nor the edict in favour of the Protestants, had yet been received throughout France. The very Parliaments who had lately declared their incompetency to establish any new tax, thought themselves competent to put a stop to the collection of those already established. It had become impossible to pursue, in all its parts, the plan of administration decreed by the King in Council. In fine, the edict which had re-established the Parliaments in 1774, at the King's accession to the throne, had stipulated that in case of forfeiture incurred by them, the Sovereign should cause the matter to be brought before the Plenary Court. They had therefore themselves acknowledged the legality of that Court, of which they had, it might be said, registered already the re-establishment.

When these explanations were all made, and the edicts read and registered, by the King's express command, the Keeper of the Seals produced a fifth and last law, by which the Parliaments were all prorogued till the new order was estab-

lished; a measure which two years after was also to be copied, not for the reform but the annihilation of all those Courts. After the last law was published, the King again spoke. He said, that all his plans tended to the happiness of his subjects, and the more moderate they were, the more should they be firmly executed. He ordered all those who were to be members of the Plenary Court to remain at Versailles, the others to depart, and the Bed of Justice to be closed.

The reader may now judge himself, both of the parts and of the whole of this grand measure, the object of a censure which has been inveterate, and the foundation of a resistance that has been deemed invincible. As it was condemned at that time without examination, it would perhaps be defended at present with partiality. Certain it is, that the public clamour, which denounced the Plenary Court to be the instrument of a despot, and a senate of slaves, would have been nearer the truth, had it accused it of being a rival power to the throne, and able to shake it. A Court, which had had no foundation in the monuments of history, and in the respect of the nation; a senate without ancestry, fortune, virtue, will, or means; which, created, maintained, and paid by force, had not in its whole organization

a single atom of independence; such a senate, no doubt, might have presented a gang of slaves, destined to extend the yoke they had first themselves submitted to, over all the Parliaments and the whole nation. But at no period would the heads of the old Nobility of France have been the servile instruments of public calamities, and less at this time than ever: nor did the chiefs of the Magistracy present a security less powerful against suspicions so injurious. After all, it was a curious fact, worthy the inconsistency of the times, that the warmest denunciators of the Plenary Court, those who painted it in such odious colours, as a body essentially devoted to passive obedience, were the very members who were to compose it, and who had formerly evinced their resistance at the dissolution of the Parliaments; who had lately evinced it but too effectually at the Royal Sittings held in the Parliaments of Paris, and who at the very time evinced it, by resolving, in spite of the repeated commands of the King, not to enter the Court in which he ordered them to take a seat.

Some persons who, whether from reason or a contrary prejudice, did not then coincide with the general opinion, allowed the possibility of this *Court of Barons and Peers* writing the great

charter of public liberty, as the great Barons had done in England, and their ending by composing a first Chamber in a representation truly national. We will not stop here to examine this conjecture, which was as plausible as any other, but resume the recital of facts.

The Grand-Chamber of the Parliament, as well as the Peers and great officers of the Crown, had received an order to remain at Versailles. The other Chambers were to quit it. They were all declared in vacation, and the *Palais de Justice* at Paris was shut up. In these circumstances, and without a place to meet in, the Parliament, immediately on leaving the Royal Apartments, held a general assembly, not in a *Tennis-Court*, but at an Hôtel in Versailles. It is pretty certain, that the majority of the Great-Chamber, when they became acquainted with the whole of the plan, of which only detached parts had been denounced to them at Paris, were strongly inclined to submission: but the fatal oath by which d'Eprémesnil had persuaded them to bind themselves beforehand, the address of the Chambers in taking advantage of that *sacred engagement*, and the spirit of opposition carried to an extreme by those Peers who elsewhere were represented as the agents of arbitrary power, combined to prevent

a compliance to the wishes of the Sovereign. A declaration in the following terms was voted: " that " the silence of the Magistrates, in his Majesty's " presence, was not to be considered as an acqui- " escence in the edicts; that they regarded them- " selves as perfect strangers to what had passed, " and that they would not accept of any place in " the new *Court* denominated *Plenary*; their oaths, " their duty, and their loyalty to the King not " permitting them to take a seat in it." The drawing up of this resolution was not however formally determined that evening, but adjourned till the next day.

The next day the King, being informed of the meeting, thought that he should be able to prevent the effect of it by appearing to be ignorant of it, and by holding in his apartments a new Sitting in the form of a Bed of Justice, to which he called those who composed the Great-Chamber of the Parliament. He told them, " that he assembled " them to confirm to them his intentions; that " he should persist in a plan the basis of which " was the tranquillity and felicity of his people, " and that he depended both upon their zeal and " loyalty." All the Chambers flew to the place where they had met the day before, where unanimously, if not in sentiments at least in votes,

" the members of the Court persisted in all the
" resolutions, particularly in that of the 3d of
" May. They moreover protested, and again
" declared, that they would not accept any place
" in the Plenary Court: and, on account of the
" impossibility of conveying this declaration to
" the King by the person usually charged to pre-
" sent their remonstrances to him, it was resolved
" that one of them should be deputed to go to
" Paris, and lodge their protest with a notary:
" it was further ordered that there should be
" printed a number of copies necessary to make
" known and authenticate their resolutions."

Preparations were making for a third Royal Sitting on the following day: but it was given up on account of a rumour, true or false, that the Peers, ten excepted, were to protest, to the King's face, against all that had been done at the Bed of Justice. The Prime Minister, who had boasted of such firmness and perseverance, suddenly found himself at a loss what to resolve upon. This measure, which was to have been so solemn, became the subject of ridicule. The Magistrates, detained at Versailles by the King's order, wandered about the streets, or through the apartments of the Palace, without ever entering the chamber prepared for their Sitting. It was necessary to

send them back to their estates, to take time to consider what was to be done. The poor Plenary Court, *dead before it was born*, was every where reviled and lampooned. Were one at present to venture to solve what is certainly very problematical, to dare to pronounce that these plans were in themselves good, still it must be acknowledged, that a Ministry so unskilful in means, and so irresolute before obstacles, could not but ruin all.

It was not the Keeper of the Seals who wanted resolution. He was not frightened either by the refusals or protests of the Châtelet, which put an end to justice throughout Paris, or by the resolutions of the Courts, one of which, the Parliament of Rouen, *denounced by name, the Sieur de Lamoignon, as a traitor to the King and to the nation.* He persevered in all the parts of the new plan under his management; the amendment of proceedings at law, the extension of the *Siéges Présidiaux*, the creation of the Bailiwicks, and the new judicial jurisdictions of the kingdom. He overcame resistance, persuaded opposers, put his laws and Courts in motion in more than one province, and in a word succeeded sufficiently to have very good grounds for saying, that if the Prime Minister had known how to persevere with his Plenary Court, the King would have

accomplished the establishment of the new form of administration, rendered necessary by the rebellion of the Parliaments.

The Archbishop of Sens recriminated. He imputed the failure of his Plenary Court to the Keeper of the Seal's grand Bailiwicks. But some grand Bailiwicks were doing business, while the Plenary Court had not even been able to form. Unhappily this species of political abortion, which at Paris was as yet only exposed to the shafts of ridicule, had already elsewhere taken a very serious and more menacing aspect.

On the same day that the famous Bed of Justice was held at Versailles for the Parliament of Paris, all the other Parliaments of the kingdom were assembled to receive the King's commands. The Provincial Military Commandant, assisted by another Commissioner appointed from the Council, went and held a Royal Sitting in each of those Courts, caused the same edicts that had been registered at Versailles to be there registered by authority, then declaring the whole Parliament in vacation, locked the doors of the *Palais*, and took away the keys.

The Provinces.

All these Courts had protested either before, at the time, or immediately after the act of registering. In Bretagne, the *Procureur Syndic* of the States had entered the Parliament Chamber before the King's Commissioners, and laid on the table the protest of the Province against all that they were going to order. At Pau, the Syndic of the States of Navarre presented himself, with the same intention, at the *Palais* during the Sitting, and was refused admission; but the Bishop of Lescars, President of those States, who was sitting in the Parliament as honorary counsellor, supplied the Syndic's place, which gave a greater solemnity to the protest. At Dijon, Besançon, Rennes, and Grenoble, there were commotions among the Nobility, who excited some in the lower class. The dispute grew warm, and people seemed every where exercising for insurrection.

Bretagne.

It was more than exercising in the two last towns we have mentioned. It is here impossible to avoid going into some details. We shall begin with Bretagne, and shall take for our authority the account published by the Intendant of the Province himself, who was one of the King's Commissioners charged with this perilous duty, of which his courage, too feebly seconded, had nearly rendered him the victim.

The Count de Thiars, the King's Commandant in Bretagne, was first Commissioner, and the Intendant was his associate. Scarcely had they entered the *Palais*, when they were hissed, abused, almost pressed to death by the crowd, and sent from one door of the Grand-Chamber to another, which they found all locked. At length, after having been an hour the sport of the young lawyers and the populace in the *Palais*, they saw a door open, and entered the Great-Chamber, where on appearing, they were given to understand, that word had been sent to all the workmen to be in the square of the *Palais* at three o'clock with their tools and cudgels. The Intendant, ready at the forms, undertook to shorten the Sitting, and the Commandant, master of the armed force, ordered a company of grenadiers to come and clear the *Palais*, and secure their retreat.

While the Commissioners were executing the King's orders in the Chamber, they saw some of the Magistrates throwing scraps of paper over the windows to the people, on which they made the greater haste to finish. On one of those scraps was written, *the Intendant is a monster that should be smothered.* The Intendant, however, had abilities, and got the better of all the quirks at-

tempted in order to lengthen the Sitting. The business was finished before the hour appointed for the workmen to come, and the Commissioners left the Court easily and quietly.

Deceived by this false appearance, the Count de Thiars dismissed the troops who had taken possession of the hall and courts of the *Palais*. Escorted by only twenty guards, the two Commissioners returned on foot to the Government House. On entering the high street, they were saluted with shouts of fury, and a shower of stones. The Count de Thiars's valet de chambre turned off one that would have broken his master's head, and which, from the slant, struck and wounded the Intendant. The Commissioners quickened their pace, and came up to a detachment of troops on the square before the Government House, who surrounding them, conducted them to the Commandant's Hotel, stopped the passage as soon as they were in, and presented their bayonets to those who wanted to pursue them. At that moment a young officer threw himself unarmed between the muskets and the people, to prevent an effusion of blood. A part of that people called him their defender, and lifted him above their heads to carry him in triumph, while another part taking him for a criminal denounced

to them from a distance, began to pelt him with stones. He was wounded on the cheek. The soldiers were going to revenge him; but he restrained them, crying out that he would rather see his own blood spilt than shed that of his fellow-citizens. Noble but imprudent youth! He received the reward his generosity deserved, though he perhaps caused a mischief which he was too young to foresee. He at least produced a diversion for the moment. The people no longer thought of forcing the house where the King's Commissioners were; and in the course of the night the Commandant introduced into Rennes detachments of foot, cavalry, and artillery, which seemed to inspire an awe for some days.

Assembly of the Clergy.

Meanwhile, the want of money, the primary cause of all these disorders, had induced the Archbishop-Minister, to convoke an extraordinary Assembly of the Clergy in Paris. He hoped to obtain a temporary subsidy from the body to which he belonged, and he also wanted the Clergy to restore credit by a solemn assent to the establishment of the Provincial Administrations, and to the equality of taxation. The Baron de Breteuil, Secretary of State, and the virtuous M. Lambert, Comptroller-General of the Finances, attended the Assembly as the King's Commissioners, to ask the small assistance

of 1,800,000 livres for the year 1788, and a like sum for the following year. The Ministry had imagined that a demand so moderate would have been granted at the time it was made: and the certainty of success seemed to be completed by a declaration coming from the King's own mouth, by which the Clergy had been assured of the preservation of all their forms. The Commissioners, after waiting with astonishment three hours for an answer, received notice that the debate was adjourned to the next day. An opposition had arisen which, on the following day, prevailed by a great majority. All the grace, all the captivating address, all the nobleness of the Archbishop of Narbonne, who was President, failed before the ingenious but gloomy and bitter censure of the Bishop of Blois. It was resolved that, before any grant were taken into consideration, the Clergy, as the first order of the State, should send an address to the King with representations on the Plenary Court, and on the actual situation of public affairs. Fifteen Commissioners, consisting of three Archbishops*, four Bishops†, and eight members of the second Order, were appointed to assist the Prelate who had proposed these remonstrances in drawing them up.

* *Reims*, *Aix*, and *Arles*.

† *Langres*, *Béziers*, *Auxerre*, and *St. Malo*.

The Prime Minister was exasperated. The opposition every where gained immense strength. The intermediate commission of the States of Bretagne, seeing the Clergy thus sanctify resistance, conceived the idea of writing to all the Bishops of the Province, to request them to order public prayers as in times of calamity: and this incendiary demand was with difficulty overcome. Fresh troops were marched into Bretagne; but already had some of the officers who commanded them begun to debate among themselves how far military obedience should be carried in civil broils. It is, no doubt, to the Count de Thiars's knowledge of this disposition that his reluctance and extreme backwardness in the employment of the military force are to be ascribed. It was an odd circumstance, that the military Commandant and civil Intendant of the Province differed in the points they did; that the Magistrate was always for force, and the General for mild orders, for an outward show of measures that might awe by their appearance without provoking by their severity, and which above all should be attended with no risk of shaking the obedience of the army, that is to say, the fidelity of the people. Perhaps in reading at prefent the interesting memoirs published by the Intendant, it were to be wished he had less severely censured the unfor-

tunate General with whom he was associated at that melancholy juncture. Perhaps the one rated too highly a kind of danger which was not sufficiently estimated by the other; for it is very certain that the revolution was still more owing to the disorganization of the army than to the insurrection of the people. Be this as it may, the Parliament of Rennes, taking advantage of this difference between the two Ministers of superior authority, held a Sitting at the house of one of their Presidents, in spite of the repeated prohibition they had received. The Count de Thiars attempting to break up the Assembly, a mob was instantly raised to defend the entrance of the house in which the Parliament were debating. A detachment of dragoons was sent to disperse the mob, but the Nobility threw themselves between the cavalry and the people. An officer, who appeared with the King's order, was refused admission into the house. The Procureur-General was admitted in, and addressing the soldiers called them the *vile satellites of despotism*, and threatened to give them up to the fury of the people. The Intendant insisted on the door being forced, and the house demolished. The Commandant received a deputation from the Parliament, and consented to withdraw the troops, on condition that the Assembly separated. The troops were dismissed,

but the Parliament continued sitting, finished their deliberation, and on breaking up published an incendiary resolution against all the edicts of the King. At night all the Members received *lettres de cachet*, by which they were banished. Deputies of the intermediate Commission flew to Versailles to demand, in the name of the rights and privileges of the Province, the recall of its Magistrates. At Rennes, the public dissensions became private quarrels, to be settled with the point of the sword. The Noblemen of the Province thought proper to challenge the officers of the King's troops, who had done their duty. In vain did the brave d'Hervilly, by his generosity, disarm an antagonist as brave but less fortunate than himself, to whom he had thrice granted his life, personal abuse and challenges went round among other champions. After several duels, in which one officer was killed and others wounded, a battle of seven against seven was resolved upon: the fourteen combatants were named, and the place and time appointed; but the Count de Thiars had still power enough to prevent this scandalous ferocity. The Archbishop of Sens, from this moment, conceived the idea of opposing division by division, of raising the *Tiers* against the two higher Orders, and of making them a rampart to the throne.

Meanwhile similar excesses were dreaded in Provence, where the Parliament, the Nobility, and the States, which had been lately re-established, distinguished themselves by protests, remonstrances, and deputations, like those of Britany. The Count de Caraman, who commanded in this province, received orders to repair thither without loss of time, and set out with instructions to negotiate. On the day after his arrival the Parliament went and declared to his face, that all the collective bodies were determined not to retract, and that no negotiation was possible. All those bodies, in fact, held the same language in their speeches, and the transition was become short, from threatening to execution.

But nothing had yet equalled the scenes that were exhibited at Grenoble. So early as the 11th of May, three days after the promulgation of the new laws, a great many of the Nobility of Dauphiné assembling at Grenoble, had appointed three Deputies to go and demand of the King the revocation of his edicts, the re-establishment of the States of Dauphiné, and the convocation of the States-General of the kingdom. This province was one of those in which there was the greatest number of families allied both with the Nobility and the Parliament. Encou-

raged by the bold resolution of the 11th, the Parliament braved the prohibition which had been notified to them, and not being able to enter the *Palais*, assembled on the 20th, at the house of M. de Bérullè, their Chief President. There they drew up protests, the style of which may be estimated by the last expression: " *they must at length be taught*," said the Magistracy of Dauphiné, speaking of the Ministers, " *what can be done by a generous nation whom they would put in chains.*" The Sittings were continued, till, on the 7th of June, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Duke de Tonnerre, the Commandant, sent round to the Members of the Parliament *lettres de cachet*, which banished them all to their estates. No sooner were these orders delivered than the advocates and attornies assembled in formal suits of mourning, and waited on the Chief President. At the same time all the clerks of the *Palais* dispersed themselves through the squares, streets, and houses of Grenoble. Their motions were directed by an attorney. It was every where repeated, that if the Parliament were taken from the town, it would be reduced to want. The shops, which were just opening, were shut again. All the bells in Grenoble rung the alarm, and the populace collected themselves in different mobs. Some went to the several gates, which

they locked, and took away the keys, notwithstanding that the Commandant had doubled the guard. Others went to the houses of the First President and other Magistrates, stopped their trunks and carriages, and with threats, pleasing to those who received them, forbade the exiles departing. Some were charged to go and keep the guard-houses about the town quiet, while the principal body of the rebels ran to the Commandant's house, and, in spite of a guard of three hundred men with fire-arms and bayonets, entered the Court. The Duke de Tonnerre then appeared at the windows, harangued them, threw them money, and promised to support the wishes of the people with the Government; but this had no effect, and they determined to break in the doors with axes. While they were doing it, people from the suburbs, and thousands of mountaineers, called from their lofty abodes by the alarm-bells, came with all kinds of weapons, and besieged the back of the Commandant's house situated on the ramparts. After their discharge of musketry, which was hardly returned, they scaled the parapet, and made themselves masters of the garden. The house was now broken in on every side. The wine in the cellars was set running, the furniture thrown through the windows, the Commandant surrounded and seized by the collar; an ax bran-

dished over his head was turned aside by an officer, but it was again raised and kept suspended till the Duke signed a capitulation dictated to him. He then engaged to consider the *lettres de cachet* as not having been issued, to order the Parliament to remain, the Warder of the *Palais* to give up the keys of it, and the troops to return to their barracks. Indeed, it was not very easy to conceive why they had left them.

In the interior of the town, however, some companies of Royal-Marine had resisted. One, seeing a shower of stones directed at an officer, surrounded him; and the soldiers being pelted entrenched themselves in a house, where they sustained a siege, and killed two men among the assailants. In other places, some patroles had arrested several of the rioters: these the conquerors in their triumphal march delivered. They all made for the *Palais*, forced the doors of the Great-Chamber, and polluted the benches of Justice by scenes of drunkenness and prostitution: they then went in quest of the Magistrates, whom they forced to take their seats, with the first President at their head, crowned with roses.

The next day the Parliament drew up a minute, stating that it was owing to compulsion that

they had not obeyed, the King's orders. The Municipality gave thanks to the regiment of Austrasie for having *spared the people,* even so far as to have put the life of their Commander into their hands, and demanded the departure of the regiment Royal-Marine, who had killed two rioters when they found themselves stoned by a thousand.

The reader doubtless will here observe with pain the frightful progress of disorganization. It was no longer only an assembly of Noblemen and a body of Magistrates in a state of resistance; but a part of the army in a state of dissolution, consequently on the eve of revolt. It was contagion to the whole army, if the infected member were not cut off; and that it was not. Who but knows that three hundred men with cannon, muskets, and bayonets, had it in their power to give up or to defend the house and person of their General, and that the other detachments of the garrison might either have kept possession of the gates, or uniting, have scoured the town of the rebels? But we have heard deplorable circumstances from eye-witnesses on that day. The guns, instead of being loaded, were filled with ashes. In some places the officers had suffered common women to go among the ranks, where,

with the most shameful wantonness, they destroyed the activity of the soldiers. To a detachment that fired, the word of command was given by a subaltern, the superior officer refusing to do it. The soldiers began to hear those words which then astonished them, but with which they were afterwards familiarized; *will you then fire on your brothers?* It was doubtful from that moment, whether sending troops into any town in which there was a ferment, was not rather to expose the allegiance of the soldier than to compel the submission of the inhabitant.

However, eight regiments were marched into Dauphiné. It was necessary to send some likewise to Pau, where the Parliament was imperiously called for by a hundred and fifty Noblemen, and tumultuously reinstated by the populace, which rivalled that of Grenoble. It was necessary to send some to Metz, where the Bailiwicks were excited to rebellion by the Parliament, and the Parliament dispersed by the Marquis de Bouillé. It was necessary to send some into Normandy, where the Magistrates were appealing from the King deceived, to the nation assembled, and were branding all the Ministers with the name of traitors. Those Parliaments were banished. The Government might well have

wished that all the Courts had taken that of Douai for an example, which, from their first emotion, had resigned and suffered things to take their course. The inhabitants of Flanders beheld their new Courts peaceably established, and seemed already to have forgotten their old one. We shall soon see them with the same tranquillity again demanding and obtaining their own States.

The Clergy. While the events we have been reviewing were taking place, the Assembly of the Clergy had perused, re-perused, modified, and presented their remonstrances. It was to be expected that a composition of this kind would be written with more discretion than what had hitherto appeared, and expectation was not disappointed in that respect. But when, doing justice to the respectful moderation of the forms, one considers at present the very ground of those remonstrances, one cannot but be greatly surprized. The Clergy had never been a political Order, independently of the two other Orders of the kingdom. When the three were assembled in States-General, they were the first, and there was no civil question to which they were not then competent; but out of the States-General the Clergy had never been assembled but on points either of Religion or Ecclesiastical Administration, or gratuitous grants

for the wants of the State. Here, convoked extraordinarily on the precise object of an extraordinary aid which the King and State require of them, the Clergy throw aside the question on which they are called to deliberate, and set themselves up to protect the nation, to censure the Government, and to admonish the Sovereign. They establish themselves as Judges between the King offended and his Courts in disgrace. They animadvert on the laws of the Sovereign, with a severity that shows itself through the affected mildness of their language. They furnish arguments to resistance. They hurt the public treasury, already distressed, by denouncing the taxes as arbitrary before the people who were liable to them. They applaud the Parliaments, for abdicating the right of registering the taxes, at the moment when public tranquillity, and the very existence of the State, urged their remaining seized of it a little longer. Like the most exaggerated declaimers, they find *in the ancient French Monarchy* only *some men and some years thinly scattered that deserve to be cited.* They not only require the convocation of the States-General, but, with as much imprudence as the Parliaments, urge the King to let that convocation be immediate; and they think that the States-General of the 18th century, assembled amidst this general ferment, will con-

fine themselves to the *free grant of subsidies*, and to *complaints and remonstrances on the other objects!* Lastly; but this is rather a matter of sorrow than of reproach, they unhappily for the first time speak of the new title of *King of the French*, an expression of sensibility in the mouths of the Clergy, which was afterwards to become a signal of degradation in those of the factious.

This Clergy then, destined in the course of the Revolution to display so much heroism and virtue, had, at that period, the misfortune to accelerate it by a serious error. They were led into it by a union of acclamations, which appeared to them to be *the public voice.* They owned, in commencing their remonstrance, that they were obeying that voice. Their wisdom did not even shelter them from the dangerous love of popularity. Following the example of those Parliaments, who had so often shown themselves their enemies, they published their remonstrances, and deprived themselves of the excuse they might have had, had they confined them to the privacy of their communications with the King, to whom they were addressed, and who alone should have been made acquainted with them. Let all the unfortunate at length forgive one another: however great the error may have been, provided it

stopped short of guilt, who shall be reproached for having been hurried away by such violent circumstances, when a body of men so respectable for their character, so prudent from habit, guarded by so many warnings, as were the Clergy of France, were unable to preserve themselves from being driven, for a short time, far from the path which they had so constantly pursued, and were so gloriously to regain?

The Clergy, in presenting their remonstrances, demanded the preservation of their privileges and immunities, and offered, instead of the extraordinary aid required of them, one tenth more added to their annual subsidies. The King accepted the offer, and confirmed their privileges, but said not a single word in reply to their remonstrances. In the debate respecting these, the Archbishop of Narbonne had always remained in the minority. When the Assembly broke up, and he waited on the King to make the usual closing harangue, he began one of the finest speeches ever delivered by a President of the Clergy with the following expression, which was instantly felt: "Bishops assembled should attend "principally to the interests of Religion. Guar-"dians and organs of the truths which it teaches, "and trustees of its salutary maxims, it is only

" by the light of this double torch that we are " allowed to observe the objects around us:" and the whole speech turned on religious topics. The King in his answer, said: " It is in speaking to " me of religion that the Clergy may be certain " of obtaining my interest and good-will..." " The Clergy should rely on my love and attach- " ment to religion, as I on the zeal and fidelity " of those who are the ministers of it." It was not possible to censure either more delicately or more forcibly the remonstrances of the Clergy on the laws and civil government, on the finances and taxes, on the Plenary Court and the Parliaments, on the nullity of France *without the National Assemblies*, and on the necessity of immediately convoking one.

The Prime Minister, however, no longer thought it possible to escape this necessity till the year 1792. Suddenly possessed with this idea, and while the Clergy were yet sitting, he produced the famous decree of the Council of July 5, 1788, one of the maddest and most fatal measures ever adopted by the Administration of any Government. By this decree the Archbishop of Sens announced *the speedy convocation of the States-General*, but without fixing the date, which still gave room to question his sincerity. Among

clauses more precise, though that was but too much so, he huddled in an *invitation* to the people to *manifest their wish on the proportion to be settled in the composition of the three Orders*; an injunction addressed to the Municipalities, Provincial Assemblies and Jurisdictions, to prepare to transmit to the Keeper of the Seals the fruit of their studies, and the result of their calculations; and, lastly, an inconceivable exhortation, in which *all the learned, all the well-informed persons of the Kingdom, were solicited to send their instructions and memorials on what was to be observed, in order to render the Assembly of the States-General as national as it ought to be.*

It would have been difficult to imagine any kind of mischief which such a measure was not calculated to create. On the vague promise no reliance was placed, but advantage was taken of the positive invitation. It was resolved to compel not only an immediate convocation of the States-General, but the adoption of a new form for them. Every one thought himself called upon to *render* the Assembly of these States *national* in his own way, and to regulate according to his ideas *the proportion and composition of the Orders.* The enthusiasm of worthy men concurred with the frenzy of seditious ones. Misguided erudition

became as fatal as presumptuous ignorance. At a time when it was necessary to calm and restrain the minds of men, all the passions were roused, and a boundless field opened for an unbridled liberty.

Britany. The intermediate commission of the States of Britany had already sent their Deputies to the King with a bold memorial, having a long list of names at the end of it, which all the Breton Noblemen had eagerly hastened to fill with their ſignatures. The King himself returned the Memorial to the Deputies, saying, "that he had determined not to read the names, that he might not have to punish those to whom they belonged," but promising at the same time "*to maintain the privileges of the province, as a reward of the obedience he required.*" A new deputation proceeded to Versailles with a new Memorial, stronger than that which had been returned. The Deputies ſolicited in vain to be admitted into the King's presence. It was to no purpose that they observed, that in conveying to the Monarch wishes and instructions relative to the States-General, they did nothing more than obey the decree of the Council which was just published. Tired by delay, and provoked by disdain, the Deputies went from door to door at every house

in Versailles and Paris that had any connexion, however slight, with Britany, making partizans, and collecting signatures. The Count de Boisgelin, then President of the Nobility, thought they had a right to his support, though his predecessor the Duke de Rohan had refused them his. The Marquis de la Fayette, who had an estate in Britany, would have been sorry to miss this occasion of making a province rise in insurrection. He already saw Pensylvania in Britany, and his own part in that of Washington. He not only signed, but improved the Memorial. He had Breton meetings at his house. The Government were enraged, and immediately determined on harsh measures, without considering whether they had the will only or the power of supporting their rigour. The twelve Deputies were taken up at night, and carried to the Bastile. The Count de Boisgelin was punished by being dismissed from his place of Master of the Wardrobe, and deprived of his command in an army which he would much rather have disbanded than commanded; and, what is incredible, to be revenged on the Duke de Praslin for his signature, his wife was struck off the list of the Ladies of the Palace! All the Breton Nobility quickly met at Rennes, rage in their heart, and threats upon their tongue. Four regiments were quartered in

the town, a camp was formed under its walls, and the Intendant of the Province owed his safety to flight. He repaired to Versailles, to give an account of the excess of the fermentation, and announce that eighteen new Deputies were close after him. Messengers were sent to meet them on the road, to forbid their putting a foot either in Versailles or Paris. Several had already arrived in these two towns. They all assembled at St. Denis, where they remained for ten days, and where they would have been suffered to remain longer, had not intelligence been suddenly received, that the Parliament of Britany, dispersed at Vannes by the Count de Murinais, had met in a house a few leagues from the town, and that in concert with the principal Members of the Nobility who had been sent for to the meeting, they had decreed a fourth deputation, to which each Bishopric was to furnish six Members. At that time there were in Britany nine Episcopal Sees, and Versailles was threatened with fifty-four Deputies. On this, no time was lost in calling up the eighteen from St. Denis. They were presented to the King on the 30th of July. On the 31st the King told them that it was through their States that he was to collect the wishes of their Province; that those States should be convoked in the month of October; that their represen-

tations should be received, and their privileges preserved. This promise could not but produce a temporary calm. The eighteen countermanded the fifty-four. No doubt was entertained of the liberty of the twelve prisoners. The Noblemen assembled at Rennes triumphed in the near prospect of the convocation of their States: but the Government immediately set to work to convert the object of their triumph into the instrument of their punishment. From that instant they used all their influence to raise the claims of the *Tiers* against the order of the Nobility; and Mareschal de Stainville, who was sent to command in the Province, and the principal persons who held offices under the Government, were instructed to direct the minds of the people towards this point, and to form a defensive alliance between them and the Crown, against what was called the insurrection of the Nobles.

Dauphiné.

An attempt was made, but in vain, to pursue the same system with Dauphiné, which, after the first affair already mentioned, was more methodical in its progress, more weighty in its resistance, more united in its efforts, and which compelled the Government always to yield to it, in appearing only to petition and explain.

The scandalous scene of insubordination and plunder which had passed at Grenoble was formally disavowed by the actual conductors of the Dauphinese revolution. They threw the blame of it, with a very severe charge, on the subaltern Agents of the Juridical Department, and found in it an additional reason for desiring a constitution solidly established, and wisely balanced, to restore general order, and prevent in future these shocking contests between the Sovereign and his officers, between the Government and the people. The Assembly of the Nobility, on the 11th of May, sent up three Deputies to the Court, and immediately after separated; in the mean time, lodging in the hands of six of their Members full powers, and the right of convoking them whenever they should judge it necessary. The Deputies being well received at Versailles, endeavoured immediately by their letters to moderate the minds of their countrymen. It is but just too to observe, that the Magistrates of the Parliament had taken advantage of the first day of tranquillity to obey the King, and repair to their place of exile. Some days after their departure, at the call of the six Delegates of the Nobility, the superior Clergy, the Noblemen of Grenoble and its neighbourhood, the Municipality of that town, and several other Members

of the *Tiers-Etat*, assembled at the *Hôtel-de-Ville;* and the Baron des Adrets being President, opened a debate on the state of the province and of the whole kingdom. It was to no purpose that the Town-Major appeared, and in the King's name ordered them to separate. While they paid him formal deference, they shewed him that their resolution was not to be shaken. After a debate of twelve hours, the convocation of all the Orders of the province for the 21st of July following, at the town of Vizille, was resolved, and that, wonderful to say, unanimously by the two first Orders, while the majority of the third voted against it! The Municipals of Grenoble, in perfect harmony with the Clergy and Nobility, were immediately summoned to Versailles. There they heard the decree of the Council, promising the States-General, published; and perhaps flattered themselves that they had been the means of determining it. A few days after the publication of it, the Prime Minister invited to his house the Municipals and the three Deputies of the Nobility. He told them in the most gracious manner that their ancient Provincial States were going to be restored to them: "But "you surely would not have them," said he, "with all the feudal defects of those gothic in- "stitutions, where so little account was made of

" the people:" and he proposed to them the States of Provence as a model. They all eagerly embraced the principle advanced by the Minister, who, on seeing the alacrity with which it was acknowledged, must have lost the hope of sowing division among the Orders either in Dauphiné or Britany. They parted promising to meet again; the Deputies openly professing that the resolutions of the Assembly of Vizille should be the rule of their conduct; and the Prime Minister secretly flattering himself that he should prevent the meeting of that Assembly.

The Mareschal de Vaux, the firmest, perhaps the most violent man in the French army, was appointed to command in Dauphiné in the place of the Duke de Tonnerre, who was recalled, as having been deficient in resolution or ability on the day of the insurrection in which he had nearly been assassinated. The Mareschal, as soon as he arrived, forbade under heavy penalties any person wearing the cockade of blue and yellow, which were the colours of Dauphiné, and had been made a badge of patriotism. The first order was obeyed; but it produced an immediate rupture between the Commandant and the Nobility. The dignity of Mareschal of France, a respect for which was so deeply engraven on the heart

of every nobleman and of every soldier, procured no attention to a warrior who had merited it by such long and honourable services. No body visited him, no answer was given to any of his invitations; and he was informed that all those who had been summoned to the Assembly at Vizille would attend it, whatever fate might be doomed for them. The Mareschal wrote in substance to the Government: " that he had " been sent too late; that when the Nobility of " a Province had declared that they would hold " an Assembly, they would hold it at the can- " non's mouth; that not being able to prevent " the meeting, the only service he could be of " was to regulate and moderate it, by permitting " it, by suffering only the precise number of the " Deputies to go to the place of meeting; by " keeping away from them all idle, disorderly, " and dangerous persons; and by holding him- " self ready to quell any tumult, if violence made " the interference of legal force necessary."

All this in fact he performed. He was applied to for permission to meet, and he granted it. Troops were stationed in all the avenues of Vizille to preserve the public peace, and prevent any disturbance of the debate of the Deputies, who repaired to their Sitting through two rows of

soldiers under arms. According to the Minister's advice, the Assembly were eager to put an end *to the feudal defects of the gothic institutions.* The Assembly consisted of two hundred and fifty Noblemen, among whom were some Ecclesiastics, and two hundred and fifty Municipals with some Citizens. They had the wisdom to reduce the number of voters to fifty, who fulfilled nearly the functions allotted to the Lords of the Articles in the ancient Parliaments of Scotland. The resolutions were proposed and drawn up by M. Mounier, Royal Judge at Grenoble, whose reputation commenced on that day. Being adopted by the fifty voters, they were presented for approbation to the rest of the Members present, who signed them with rapture. The three Orders unanimously resolved: " never to separate the interests of the " province from those of the whole kingdom; to " demand the States-General for France at the " same time with the Provincial States for " Dauphiné; to claim in both the double repre- " sentation of the third Order already established " in all the Provincial Assemblies; lastly, to " solicit the King to abolish *lettres de cachet;* to " dismiss the present Ministers, and to recal pro- " visionally the Parliaments till the holding of " the States-General." Among other resolutions, if not less important at least of an interest more

circumscribed, the Assembly resolved that, reckoning from that moment, the tax substituted for the Corvée should be borne equally by the three Orders; and they adjourned to the 5th of September at the town of St. Robert near Grenoble.

This adjournment, this continued and general solicitude expressed by Dauphiné for the fate of France, this character of protection displayed by one province in regard to all the others, and which these took delight in acknowledging, again perplexed the Government, who began to consider whether there were no means to repress these excesses of zeal. Meanwhile, the Mareschal de Vaux suddenly experienced a difficulty of which nobody had thought. It was a rule, that the Commission of a Commandant should be registered in the Parliament of the Province. At the time when the Mareschal de Vaux arrived, that of Grenoble was exiled, and the place of their Sittings shut up. On this point his power was disputed. The Court in haste sent a Messenger to meet the Duke de Tonnerre, whom it had recalled. Proceeding gently he was met half way, where he had stopped, and received the order to go back. The Government was only the more weakened by the ridiculousness of all these counter-orders, and the amalgamation of two Com-

mandants, one personal and the other official. The Mareschal was seized with a serious illness; and, whatever is thought of those who had then the real power in Dauphiné, it is but justice to say, that the public tranquillity was maintained there only by patriotism. Meanwhile, Languedoc and Rousillon put themselves in motion. The Assembly of Vizille produced that of Toulouse. Flanders and Hainault demanded, with more phlegm indeed, but still they demanded likewise their Provincial States. Three couriers arrived in one day from Béarn. The imagination was at a loss where to stop its fears. Credit declined; the alarm for public and private property encreased hourly. The Keeper of the Seals continued to attend, and always with some success, to the establishment of his part in the new system. He established his tribunals, even in several towns of Dauphiné that were jealous of the ascendancy assumed by the capital of the Province. But the Prime Minister consumed himself in vain efforts and sterile negotiations to open his Plenary Court. In fine, perceiving himself to be very near the last extremity, no longer able to act without a means of regaining confidence and restoring order, reduced to the alternative either of recalling the Parliaments, who might impeach him, or of convoking the States-General, who might

feel grateful to him for their existence, he determined on the latter.

On the 8th of August, 1788, there appeared a decree of the Council, announcing the convocation of the States-General, fixing the opening of them for the 1st of May, 1789, and suspending till then the Plenary Court.

From that day forward, nothing on earth could have prevented the meeting of the States-General, except perhaps a foreign war, and the King at the head of his army.

NOTES

AND

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

TO

CHAPTER II.

Page 204, line 9, after—*in* 1776.

THE fidelity of the French army began to be shaken during the ministry of Mr. de St. Germain, by the new regulations introduced which were repugnant to the habits and character of the nation.

The history of this Minister is a kind of Romance. He was born in France, and at first entered into the Society of the Jesuits, which he quitted for the profession of arms. He went into the Emperor's service, and distinguished himself in the war against the Turks in the year 1737. Returning to France, he acquired great reputation in the war 1741, and in that of 1757. His pragmatic and minutely disciplinarian spirit having raised him many enemies, he left the country, and

went into the service of Denmark, where his fame obtained him the highest military dignities. He enjoyed repose, and the greatest consideration, in that kingdom, till the breaking out of the intrigues of the Palace, which brought on the melancholy scenes of 1772. He then retired to Hamburgh, where, in consequence of a bankruptcy, he lost almost the whole of his fortune; after which he returned to France, and was living unknown at a village in Alsace when the Mareschal de Muy pointed him out to Louis XVI, as the fittest man to succeed him in the War Department. This opinion being corroborated by the instructions and notes which the Dauphin had left his son respecting the persons he should employ, Mr. de St. Germain was appointed Minister at War after the death of the Mareschal de Muy. He brought with him into office that pragmatic spirit, and that fondness of innovation, which had characterized him in all the countries where he had served. Finding the King anxious to remedy the disorders of the State by prudent savings, he thought it incumbent upon him to carry reform and change into every part of his administration. He began with the King's household troops. The chosen companies, such as the two companies of Musketeers grey and black, those of the Horse-Grenadiers, the Gendarmes, and the Chevaux-legers became his first victims. The reform of these reduced the one half of the King's household-troops. It was the more surprising, as these companies being all composed of noblemen or wealthy young gentlemen, served at their own expence, and as their suppression produced but a very paltry saving, compared to the brilliant services which these corps had performed on a thousand occasions, and to the lustre and security they gave to the throne. The nation, and it must be told, even the Court and Ministry, applauded this reform. The success obtained on this occasion by Mr. de St. Germain suggested to him the idea of carrying the reforming

axe among the Carabiniers and Gendarmerie. The opposition he experienced in this attempt obliged him to relinquish his plan; but, not to remain idle, and to satisfy his passion for innovation, he made Convents of Monks of the military schools. One day he made Colonels *en second*, another he diminished the number of Field-officers; he augmented the pay of the soldiers, and at the same time disgusted them by a species of severity to which they were not accustomed. He abolished the punishment of death for desertion, but conceived, as a substitute, other punishments incompatible with the French military character. Among these, he thought of making the grenadiers, among whom honour was the great spring of action, submit ignominiously to the bastinado. This order created a ferment which in some corps rose to a mutiny. To restore quiet an attempt was made to change this punishment into blows given with the flat part of a broad sword, and the commutation was supported by several superior officers fond of innovations.

However, the military in general being disgusted, the Minister found himself continually thwarted in his projects. His mind, fiery, impatient, and suspicious, could not bear contradiction; he had tired every body, and his fall was resolved upon. This was softened at first, by giving him a coadjutor in the Count de Montbarey, but he was soon under the necessity of resigning, and he died a short time after with vexation at seeing all his great schemes prove abortive. The sect of Philosophers were lavish beyond measure in praise to his memory. They made so much noise about his valour, firmness, disinterestedness, and grand views, that his successors never dared to repair the injury he had done the King and the army, nor to reinstate one of the companies he had reformed, a misfortune which became irreparable some years after.

Page 205, line 8, after—*than the war itself.*

All Europe is well acquainted with the causes of the war which broke out in 1775, between England and her Colonies. A stamp-tax, and a duty on teas, which the British Parliament thought they might impose on the Colonists, without their consent being actually given by a Parliamentary Representation, served them as a pretence for resorting to arms, and for erecting in the Thirteen Provinces at once the standard of rebellion and independence. France conceived that the occasion afforded her an opportunity of revenging herself for the disasters she had experienced in the preceding war with England. The war had raged three years between the Mother Country and her Colonies, much to the disadvantage of the former, when apprehensions began to spread in France that America would become independent by her own means, and that the French, by neglecting to enter into a treaty with her, would lose the opportunity of afterwards forming an advantageous alliance with her. Nantes, Bordeaux, and the other sea-ports resounded with the shouts of liberty and vengeance, introduced there by the insurgents. Enormous profits made by some adventuring privateers, that ventured on secret expeditions, enflamed the minds of the people. Multitudes of French officers embarked to pursue their fortune in arms in those new regions. It was no more in the King's power to calculate or foresee what was one day to be in respect to him the re-action of this rebellion, than it was in the power of the first Kings of his race to oppose the fury of the Crusades, or presage the consequence of them. His Ministers had at first given the Americans private assistance, and if it were necessary to prove that that assistance was unknown to Louis XVI, it would be enough to say, that the agent employed on the occasion by

Mr. de Maurepas was the famous Caron de Beaumarchais, whom the King would never hear named, and whom he even imprisoned at St. Lazare during the course of hostilities. An open war appeared more honourable than an underhanded and shameful intrigue, and Louis XVI. determined on the popular war, because the whole nation seemed to require it; but he has given a thousand proofs of its being contrary to his opinion, and repugnant to his feelings. He several times expressed this to the Mareschal de Castries.

Page 236, line 26, after—*This man.*

In the Notes I have collected respecting the manner in which the Queen expressed herself on the subject of the Ministers whom the King had just appointed, I find several replies in which her wisdom and love of the public good are manifested.

When Mr. d'Ormesson was appointed Comptroller-General of the Finances, the Courtiers said: "Our finances will now "find somebody to speak to. Mr. d'Ormesson is a magistrate "of integrity. It is a pity he is almost blind."—"Why so?" said the Queen. It was replied, "Because fortune is like-"wise blind, and the blind with the blind must always lose "their way." To this her Majesty, who had a high esteem for Mr. d'Ormesson, answered: "At all events, if Mr. d'Or-"messon does not see, he has a guide that may be depended "upon, his probity."

When Mr. de Malesherbes was appointed to the Ministry, she said to him: "The choice the King has made of you, Sir, "proves that virtue is honoured, and the King has to-day paid "what was due to it."

END OF CHAP. II.

CHAPTER III.

The Convocation of the States-General continued—Fall of the Archbishop of Sens—Recall of Mr. Necker—Second Assembly of the Notables—Meeting of the States-General—Situation of the Queen at this Period, and five Years before.

It was amid this general fermentation; it was after the Government had exerted instances of authority which had only served to show violence followed by weakness; it was when the greatest bodies of the State remained victors in the assaults made upon them by the Ministry, and were still intoxicated with their triumph, that the Archbishop of Sens solemnly promised the convocation of the States-General. A Courtier asked him, if he were not alarmed at the thought of holding those States? *Sully held them,* replied the Prelate. Thus to speak of himself, after an administration of one year, in which he had stumbled at every step, as the equal of the greatest Minister perhaps the Kings of France had ever had; thus to confound the Assembly of Notables of 1596, with an Assembly of the States-General in 1789, was an excess of presumption scarcely credible.

But the Archbishop Loménie was not even destined to hold those States he had con-

voked with so much solemnity. In the most tranquil times the expectation of a political change, the issue of which is uncertain, always gives a shock to credit. After a year of embarrassment in the administration, in the midst of a struggle in which Government had experienced so many defeats, the convocation of the States-General became alarming for the fortune of those very persons who had brought it about, under the pretence of establishing on fixed grounds the right of the King, of the Great, and of the nation, that is to say, with a desire of seeing it produce what was said to be wanting to France, a written constitution. There was a sudden stop of the circulation of specie. It became impossible to repeat the anticipations made by the Treasury every year of the revenue of the ensuing year; it was necessary to pay the anticipations which had been made the year preceding of the current year, and the excess of which was beyond all bounds of prudence. It was necessary to provide not only for the usual services, but likewise for expensive purchases of articles of subsistence, to keep off the scarcity which already began to be felt; for, if I may here take the liberty of using the expression, France was no less threatened with hunger, than tormented with the thirst of independence and

innovation. The Prime Minister saw the day close at hand when the Treasury would be entirely empty.

He conceived the idea of settling a part of all the payments for the remainder of the year, and to the last day of the year following, in which the States-General were to be held, by bills bearing interest. The decree of the Council, announcing this new measure of Finance, was published in Paris on the 16th of August. I heard the men usually employed to cry and hawk about the streets the acts of Administration, smothering their voice as they called this, and scarcely daring to go through the title which had been suggested for this edict by a man of considerable talents. Mr. de Loménie, having consulted Mr. de Rivarol on a softening title to be placed at the head of it, that the public might not be startled, the ingenious scholar advised him to call it: *Decree of the Council of State, concerning payments*; and for this epigrammatic turn the author obtained a place in the Prime Minister's office, and the promise of a pension. I shall never forget what I felt on hearing this decree cried at Paris and Versailles. At present, reflecting a little more calmly on so many atrocious scenes, the smothered voice of those public criers, which I think I still hear,

that prelude of so many great and fatal events, brings to my mind those subterraneous noises, and those bellowings of animals, which in the new world are the certain presages of a convulsion of nature.

An universal alarm manifested itself, in such a manner as to create fears of an insurrection at Paris. The Prime Minister, frightened, implored the Queen's protection, representing himself as a victim of his zeal in supporting the Royal authority, and requested the assistance of Mr. Necker in the finances, blushing for all he had done for a year past to keep him away from any part in the administration of them. Mr. de Mercy applied to the old Director-General, requesting him to unite with the Prime Minister. Mr. Necker replied, that the year before he would have been ready, to share the labours of the Archbishop of Sens, but that, at the present moment, he neither could nor would share his discredit. The Prime Minister knew not what to do, but was unwilling to resign. Discontents broke out every where. One of the King's brothers advised his Majesty of the fermentation which was rising in Paris. The Queen sent for the Archbishop, and told him that it was absolutely necessary to yield to the storm. The King came in during

the conversation. The Minister wept, and excited, and abused their Majesties' feelings. He wished to be consoled for his resignation by obtaining a Cardinal's cap for himself; for his nephew, who was scarcely of age, the coadjutorship of his Archbishopric, joined to one of the richest Abbeys of France; and for his niece a place of Lady of the Palace. He had, in the course of his short ministry, amassed a fortune of from five to six hundred thousand livres a-year on the estates of the Church. He left his brother Minister of War, having previously obtained for him a blue ribbon and the Government of a Province. The most brilliant, the most successful services could not have been better rewarded.

Mr. Necker, pointed out as the only person able to save the State, was called to Versailles the very next day. He was first introduced into the Queen's Cabinet, where he must have been greatly affected to hear Her Majesty bewail the wrongs suffered by so virtuous, so good a Prince as the unfortunate Louis XVI; where he must have felt exceedingly at the unhappiness She expressed to him, at the prayers She addressed to him, for the salvation of the Monarch and the Monarchy. The conversation had lasted nearly half an hour when the King joined them. He spoke of his people,

not of himself; of the repose of France, and not of his own. In testifying his favour to the Minister recalled, he used a particular expression, to make him forget the banishment to which his rival Calonne had had him condemned the year before. Mr. Necker protested his devotion. On leaving the Queen's apartments, he was received with the transports and acclamations of public joy. The galleries of the Palace, the Courts, the streets of Versailles, soon after, the metropolis, and by degrees all France, resounded with the cry of *vive le Roi, vive Mr. Necker.*

Mr. Necker was called to rule and to save France in very painful circumstances. He found the Royal Treasury containing only four hundred thousand livres, the Parliaments in exile, all the Provinces in commotion, the meeting of the States-General promised so solemnly as hardly to permit the postponing of it a single day, scarcity threatening France with all the horrors of famine, and Paris already overflowed with a deluge of pamphlets on the States-General, in consequence of the indiscreet application of the late Minister.

It must be allowed that the management of the new Administration contributed to remove imperceptibly most of the difficulties under which

the former Ministry could not but have sunk. Credit revived, the bankers again aided the operations of the Royal Treasury, the decree of the Council of State *concerning payments* was revoked, and there was an end for a moment to the fear of a Royal paper-money, which the capitalists of Paris dreaded above every thing; those very men, who a short time after warmly adopted the much more disastrous system of a fraudulent and sacrilegious paper-money, which ruined all France. The payments were made almost regularly—provisions arrived in abundance—Britany became calm at the release of the twelve Deputies from the Bastile—Normandy, Burgundy, Béarn, and Dauphiné changed their menaces into expressions of gratitude. Amidst the cries that were heard against local privileges, and on the necessity of a representative body for the whole of France; I say, amidst the cries of some fanatics, the bulk of the French nation were heard pouring forth the accents of loyalty, of fidelity to the Monarch, and of respect for the principles and forms of Monarchy.

However, the intoxication of the Parisian populace at the news of the resignation of the Archbishop of Sens, and of the appointment of Mr.

Necker, had risen to a tumultuous pitch, which degenerated into sedition. They burnt with parade, on the *Place Dauphine*, a figure dressed up as a Cardinal. They were then going to set fire to the *Hôtel de Brienne*, but were repulsed by the horse-patrole. They attacked the foot-patrole, and driving before them that handful of men, who could make but little resistance, they burnt some sentry-boxes, and demolished some guard-houses, situated in various quarters of the town. Force was employed to repel force; the French and the Swiss guards vied with each other in doing their duty; the mobs dispersed and appeared no more, and tranquillity reigned in the capital.

The Royal Treasury being replenished, and public tranquillity restored, the new Minister immediately applied himself to the recall of the Parliaments, as a measure the most ardently desired by the public. The Parliament of Paris had expressed the most decided aversion to the Keeper of the Seals, Lamoignon, and even in their exile threatened to denounce him to the King's face at the Bed of Justice about to be held. Mr. Necker had several times, since his return to the Ministry, had opportunities of being convinced of the firmness of the Keeper of the Seals, and being

sensible that he should be soon in want of a steady character to support him in the commotions impending over France, he would have been glad to keep him in the Ministry. He struggled for some days to preserve him in spite of his want of popularity, but was at last obliged to give him up. Lamoignon bore his disgrace with noble firmness. Had it not been for the confusion of his private affairs, he would have enjoyed a delightful retirement in the ancient and magnificent habitation of his ancestors, in the bosom of a family by whom he was adored, and surrounded by numerous friends, who were doomed in a short time to experience the sorrow of seeing him perish by an untimely death.

His successor was named by the King himself, who remembered that Miromesnil, formerly Keeper of the Seals, had several times extolled the virtues of Mr. de Barentin, who had been Advocate-General to the Parliament of Paris, and was then first President of the Court of Aids. The Seals were delivered to this Magistrate. The Parliament satisfied, resumed their functions without a Bed of Justice, and registered a Declaration, by which the King revoked provisionally all his edicts of the 8th of May, and what had been done in consequence. The great Bailiwicks were

suppressed, all the old Courts were re-established; the exiled Magistrates returned to their functions; and the States-General, forwarded four months, were announced for the month of January, 1789.

The Parliament of Paris did not content themselves with purely and simply registering this Declaration. They demanded that there should be no vacations this year for the Courts of Justice, and that the mode of convoking the approaching States-General should be conformable in every thing to that of the States of 1614, over which it was asserted, that the Magistracy had exercised a great ascendency. They at the same time ordered their *Procureur-General* to commence an impeachment of the Ministers lately dismissed. The King annulled the decree ordering the impeachment of the former Ministry; imposed absolute silence on the *Procureur-General*; sent a Declaration to prorogue the Courts as usual; in short, annulled all the modifications or conditions which the Parliament, in registering the Royal Declaration for the re-establishment of the Courts, had annexed to the pure and simple announcing of the States-General contained in that Declaration.

But those modifications, previous to their being annulled by the King's authority, had been proscribed with an energy truly alarming, by the men who at clubs, in coffee-houses, and private parties were already regarded as the organs of public opinion. Never was there a more rapid revolution in the minds of men; never did imprecation so suddenly succeed to enthusiasm. I saw this very Parliament, which was received in triumph on the 22d of September for urging the meeting of the States-General, grossly reviled on the 24th, because, scrupulously adhering to forms, they desired that the convocation of them should take place according to the precedent of 1614.

The last circumstance would have gravelled Ministers more powerful than those who had just taken the helm of the State. Mr. Necker did not dare to take upon himself alone the responsibility of deciding among so many doubtful questions, among so many difficulties, encreased by the disuse of the National Assemblies, the want of records or the contradiction of those existing, the inconsistency of customs, the alteration of manners and modes of thinking, the augmentation of population and territory, the progress or abuse of knowledge, the influence of new fortunes raised by commerce and public

loans, and, above all, the destructive fervour that had taken possession of the minds of men. Mr. Necker thought it best to assemble the Notables, in order to consult them on these delicate questions; and he called together those who had been convoked the year before, so that he had not even to answer for the choice, while he added to his own popularity that which these Notables had acquired by their resistance. Their meeting was appointed for the 3d of November following at Versailles.

The secret object of Mr. Necker in this convocation was to obtain the sanction of the Notables to the resolution he had already taken, of giving to the third Order of the State, a number of representatives equal to that of the Deputies which the two higher Orders together were to send to the States-General. From the period at which the *Tiers-Etat* was first admitted to the States-General to those of 1614, there had been a good deal of difference respecting the number of votes accorded to that Order; however, it had always had several more than either of the others singly, but never so many as both together. Were they to have but a third of the votes in the National Assembly? Or, were they to have half of them? This was the interesting question which agitated

every mind; and it was for the purpose of resolving it that Mr. Necker advised his Majesty to convoke the Notables, while, in fact, the Minister's final determination was already taken, to violate the fundamental law of the kingdom, to change the ancient constitution of the States, and to contravene the positive declarations of the Parliament, by giving the *Tiers-Etat* a double representation.

The Notables perceived the snare laid for them, and refused to sanction Mr. Necker's intentions. They saw clearly in this dangerous innovation the fall of the Monarchy; it shackled the two higher Orders; it even subjected them to the will, to the caprice of that which only held the third place in the State. The Boards of MONSIEUR, of the Count d'Artois, of the Prince de Condé, of the Duke de Bourbon, and of the Prince de Conti, declared against the pretensions of the *Tiers-Etat*. The Duke of Orléans alone loudly declared himself of a contrary opinion; and immediately employed the Abbé Siéyès, and an officer of artillery, the Chevalier de Laclos, author of the infamous novel called *Liaisons Dangereuses*, whom he had lately made his private Secretary, to draw up for his Bailiwicks instruc-

tions which contained the seeds of all the revolutions that have since taken place.

This too was the time when the pamphlets, so imprudently solicited by the Minister Loménie, sprang up in every quarter. Of the thousands which the press then vomited on France, the two most remarkable were written by the Abbé Siéyès and the Count d'Entraigues. That of the former was entitled: *What is the Tiers-Etat?* That of the latter, *Memoir on the States-General, their Rights, and the Manner of convoking them.*

In the first of these pamphlets, the Abbe Siéyès considered the society of 24 millions of men who composed the kingdom of France, as a horde of savages spontaneously determining from that moment to quit the state of pure nature, and enter into a civil association. He proved to the populace, which was not very difficult, that every man was a Citizen before he was a Nobleman or a Priest; that the priesthood was a profession and not a political order; that pecuniary privileges were unjust and odious; that the *Tiers-Etat* was every thing; and might alone form a nation without Nobles, whereas Nobles and Priests, without the *Tiers-Etat*, would not dare to have any such

pretension. In a word, he set out with the law of nature, to re-mould all the customs of a society which had been formed for fourteen centuries, and was in the first rank of the civilized nations of Europe: this work was of course received with avidity by the multitude, who thought they had every thing to gain by the destruction of established forms. It was in vain replied to the positions of the Abbé Siéyès, that the French were not savages assembling to form themselves into a nation, and to choose a head, but a nation called upon by their lawful Sovereign to assist him in reforming some abuses; that they were about to meet, conformably to customs established from time immemorial, to remedy evils, and produce great good; that the Nobility and Clergy had offered to the King the sacrifice of their pecuniary privileges, and had reserved for themselves only empty honours and frivolous distinctions, of which the *Tiers-Etat* could not be jealous; the impulse was given to the levellers, who no longer concealed their design to endeavour to alter, confound, and sacrifice every thing.

But the most violent of all those publications, and which contributed most to inflame the minds, was the Memoir of the Count d'Entraigues. It left all the others very far behind, not only in

respect to ability and eloquence, but in respect likewise to the energetic zeal, or rather the inconceivable boldness, which broke out in every page. This Languedocian Nobleman, the pupil of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the friend of Chamfort, had taken his law of nature from the *Social Contract* of the former, and his civil and public law from the scenes of the *Merchant of Smyrna*, a comedy written by the latter. He flattered himself, that it would be his lot to play a great part in inflaming the passions of the multitude, and thus to acquire immense popularity. His work was a complete treatise, of near three hundred pages, setting out not only with the establishment of the Franks among the Gauls, but with the original rights of man in the state of nature, and going through all the vicissitudes of the French Government for fourteen centuries down to the era at which he wrote.

The author took as a motto the form used by the ancient *Cortés* of Arragon, in investing their King with the sovereignty, promising him a conditional obedience: *we, who are individually of as much value as you, and who together are more powerful than you, promise to submit to your Government, if you maintain our rights and our privileges; if not,*

*not**. It must be allowed, that no Prince ever less merited than Louis XVI. to have an engagement of allegiance coupled with a menace of deposition: but however intemperate this motto must have appeared, it was soon forgotten in the style of the book itself.

The first sentence was a consecration of the Republican form of Government, and an anathema against Monarchy †. The second represented the French people as a parcel of slaves, groaning under the excess of oppression ‡. Next, the right of insurrection was laid down §, the

* Nous qui valons chacun autant que vous, et qui tous ensemble sommes plus puissans que vous, nous promettons d'obéir à votre Gouvernement, si vous maintenez nos droits et nos privilèges ; si non, non.

† " No doubt, it was to afford to the most heroic virtues a " country worthy of them that Heaven willed the existence of " Republics; and perhaps to punish the ambition of men, it " permitted the rising of great Empires, of Kings, and Masters."

‡ " But always just, even in his chastisements, God has " permitted that at the height of their oppression there should " exist a means by which nations enslaved may regenerate " themselves."

§ " In England insurrection is allowed; it would unques- " tionably be lawful if the Parliament itself were to destroy a " constitution which its laws should preserve."—(P. 19.)

legislative power of the Crown was attacked*, declared incompatible with its hereditary right†, and accused of rendering the condition of the French *worse than that of the Turks*‡. All Courts, without distinction, were denounced as *hot-beds of corruption* §; all courtiers as *the natural enemies of public order*, as a *vile crowd of slaves at once insolent and low* ‖; the throne as a seat where, *if the vile and dangerous passions were not seen honoured and respected*, it was by chance ¶; hereditary Nobility as *the most dreadful scourge with which Heaven in its wrath could curse a free nation* **; the ages which honoured it as *ages of shame* ††; the *remains of veneration for it, which they had transmitted to us*, as a *great evil* that had occasioned the calamities of the nation ‡‡. The Clergy as well as the Nobility

* " What answer can be given to those whom the habits of " servitude have so degraded, that they strive to persuade them- " selves and us that the Legislative Power was placed unlimited " and undivided in the hands of one man, and that directly " twenty millions of beings submitted to a single person and " his posterity? &c."—(P. 25.)

† " Great Gods! If there be a man on earth incapable by " his situation of exercising the Legislative Power, it is a King, " and especially an hereditary King, &c."—(P. 36.)

‡ P. 159.

§ P. 26. ‖ Ibid. ¶ Pages 26 and 27. ** P. 61.

†† P. 86. ‡‡ P. 87.

existed *a separate nation in the nation*; had as well as the Nobility, *interests distinct from those of the people*; like the Nobility, *held their deliberations apart from the people*, and, like them, deliberated exclusively on *their own interests*. The rebel, murderer, traitor, Marcel, execrated by successive ages for exciting the Parisians to take up arms against their captive King, for assassinating the Mareschals of Normandy and Champagne in the arms of the Dauphin-Regent, for kindling the passions that produced *la Jacquerie*, in short, for intending to crown all his crimes by delivering up Paris and France to the yoke of the English, was in this volume tenderly recommended to *the clemency* of the eighteenth century, and defended with warmth against the *excessive severity* of the preceding ages. *The man of the people, the idol of the people, enjoying by that title a power without bounds*, was by that title alone *excusable. The criminal, misled by the ardour of serving the people . . . . deserved the national clemency.* And what do these terms, so equivocal in themselves, signify in the sense of the author? By this people, whose interests were so sacred, that they became an excuse for crimes committed to promote them, does he mean the social body altogether, from the head to the last of its members? No: but the *plebs*, separated from the

Prince, from the Clergy, from the Nobles, and from the men of property. He means the *Tiers-Etat people* *, who, in this long and violent declamation, are incessantly brought in as being *the only Sovereign. The sovereign will of the people* †, *the Majesty of the people* ‡, *the strength of the people, had no superior but God. The people by whom all is, and for whom all exists, addressed humble prayers to God only. Out of the Church their prayers were orders, and their complaints laws. The power of all, by that itself, could do all that it willed, and rendered lawful all that it ordained.* Lastly, as to the composition of the States-General about to be held, in regard to the respective number of the Deputies to be sent by each Order; while many persons were alarmed at the double representation of the *Tiers-Etat*, already obtained in the Provincial Assemblies, and demanded in some Assemblies of particular States, this author was scarcely satisfied with the double proportion. He repeated, that *the Tiers-Etat was the People*, that *the People were the State itself*; that *the other Orders were merely political divisions, while the People was every thing by the immutable law of nature, whose will it was, that all should be subordinate to them.* He repeated, that *in the people resided the national omni-*

* P. 39, 106, 198, 225, 296, &c.

† P. 129. ‡ P. 129 and 258.

potence; that *by them the whole State existed*, and he drew this conclusion: " The number, therefore, " of their Deputies should equal *at least* that of " the two Orders united, that the public interest " might always be predominant in an Assembly " which would cease to be national, if ever the " interest of any Order whatever should invali- " date or annul the will of the people *.

He who published such a doctrine, would easily foresee that the dread of all the disorders it might produce would be urged against it. He anticipated and scouted the objection. He cut it down with a single sentence: *there is no sort of disorder which is not preferable to the fatal tranquillity procured by absolute power* †.

So too that deficit, which too late has appeared child's play when compared to the more terrible dangers which experience has shown, but which at the time when it was revealed must have produced dismay and despair; that deficit which had been reduced to 56 millions, by not including in it the debt which had many years to run, but which the Notables in their deliberations had calculated to amount to 146 millions, and the Arch-

* Pages 246 and 247. † P. 251.

bishop of Sens, in his statement, to 175; that deficit, in the work in question, was called *the treasure of the nation*, and any Minister that should *make it up* by himself, *be the means what they would*, was branded before-hand with the names of *traitor* and *enemy to the public* *.

Such was the firebrand thrown among the inflammable matter already spread over France. This work appeared some days before the opening of the second Assembly of Notables. The ravage it made in the public mind can hardly be conceived. Mr. Necker took advantage of the impression it produced, to gain a majority in the King's Council in favour of his own opinion, against the almost unanimous decision of the Boards of the Notables, confirmed and sanctioned by the repeated declarations of the Parliament of Paris; and on the 26th of December, 1788, the Government, on the Report of the Minister of the Finances, declared that the *Tiers* should alone have as many votes as the Nobility and Clergy together, that is to say, one half of the votes, in the States-General. It was settled at the same time, that the convocation should be made in Bailiwicks, according to their population, and

* P. 259.

that the number of Deputies for the nation in the States-General should at least be a thousand.

Mr. Necker in this Report called in the aid, among others, of a new power, unknown before he made use of it, and which all the innovators afterwards ardently invoked. He there talked *of a certain buzz of Europe (d'un certain bruit sourd de l'Europe)* which was heard to favour the double representation of the *Tiers-Etat*, and which could not be opposed without danger. This *bruit sourd de l'Europe* was nothing more than the vulgar clamours excited by the writings that daily appeared, and which all the echoes of the clubs and coffee-houses of Paris faithfully repeated to Mr. Necker.

I will here, on this subject, state a fact with which I was acquainted. It will give a criterion of the motives that instigated this Minister to act, and of the means he used to attain his end. During the interval between the second Assembly of Notables and the meeting of the States-General, and even some months after the meeting of the latter, he had in his pay a man who had been editor of the Avignon Courier, one Artaud, an insignificant writer, known by some dramatic pieces. This man was specially commissioned by

Mr. Necker to hold a kind of club at his apartments in the *Palais-Royal*, and to have occasionally political meetings and dinners. These were attended among others by Count Mirabeau, Mr. de Clermont-Tonnere, Messrs. Duport and Freteau, Counsellors in the Parliament of Paris; some academicians, such as Messrs. Suard, Rulhières and Chamfort; Swiss and Protestant bankers, persons of the household of the Duke of Orléans, the Abbé Siéyès, the Bishop of Autun, the Abbé Dubignon, and several more of the same stamp, who, with a very few exceptions*, were factious, or determined opponents of the Court. The Minister of the Finances gave his spy four thousand livres a month, and was informed every morning of the debates that had taken place at his house the evening before, and of the measures supported by the majority of opinions. The reports that came from this secret meeting had frequently great influence on the operations of the Government. At Artaud's, the Court and the Parliaments themselves were openly attacked

* The Sieur Coindet, Mr. Necker's private Secretary; M. Ginguené, Mad^e. Necker's Secretary; a Mr. Fornier of Nismes, a banker; and Mr. Necker's intimate friend, M. Hogguer, banker, a partner in the House formerly established by Mr. Necker, went occasionally to this meeting, to know what was going on, and to certify the favourable dispositions of the Minister.

and exposed. The opinions approved at this meeting were rapidly propagated, by subaltern agents, in the inferior clubs, and all the public places of Paris. They were transmitted likewise to the leaders of the Provincial States newly established; and from the Provinces they returned to Paris to support the system of the innovators. It was the repetition of these factious opinions that Mr. Necker called the *buzz of Europe*. As they all tended to weaken the power of the chief of the French Monarchy, whom this Minister was ambitious of ruling, they suited him too well not to be eagerly adopted; and it was for the purpose of making them pass, that, on his own authority, he conceived the idea of investing them with the *buzzing* sanction of Europe. All the revolutionists who followed Mr. Necker took the same method. In like manner, after seeing the first attacks of democracy on the throne of France, made *in the name of Europe*, we saw the last murders of the Princes of the House of Bourbon committed *in the name of the French People*; while, in fact, Europe and the French People took no other part, in all that has been said or done in their name, than that of participating the universal horror which the consequences have excited.

Mr. Necker had lost the King's confidence in the year 1780, by his spirit of innovation, by some dangerous ideas he had dared to manifest, and by the ambition he had shown to become a Member of the Council, in spite of the laws of the State by which he was prohibited. The germ of whatever virtues nature might have planted in his heart was blighted at the period of his disgrace. From that instant the ambition that pressed upon him removed all delicacy as to the means of satisfying it. He wanted to be, in spite of the King, the Minister of the people. The crisis unhappily afforded him an easy occasion to be so. His whole conduct from the time of his first disgrace, his annual publications on politics, on finance, and on religious opinions, bore the marks of a low, concealed intrigue, and showed a desire of attracting great popularity and numerous partizans at the expence of the fidelity due to the Sovereign, and of the respect due to his Court. He interfered with matchless arrogance between the people and the Monarch. It was thus that he in a manner obtained his recall in spite of the King, and returned triumphant into administration, intoxicated with power and vain glory.

But he deceived himself as to his power. He thought he was able to direct the party whose creature he was, and soon discovered that he was only the instrument and the support of the factious. He was still supported by the annuitants and bankers, while the *Palais-Royal* spurned him. Mirabeau and the Abbé Siéyès attacked him in the height of his glory, and treated him, in their pamphlets, as a presumptuous man, without views, without means, and incapable of performing the promises he had made.

In fact, his whole conduct at that period demonstrated the weakness and shortness of his views. Instead of taking for his support the influence of the great bodies of the State, of the opinion of the Princes, of the Court, of the Notables, and of the Parliament of the kingdom, he sought after and made much of the opinion of persons of no rank or property, opposers of the Government, men of ill fame, and even already guilty. Instead of giving a grand and noble impulse to the public mind, he seemed to receive it himself; and thus caressing all the little passions, he invited them to rally round him, and appeared to promise them his support. He plunged headlong into the torrent of the Revolution, without foreseeing whither it would sweep

the Government which he was called to direct; he had not only neglected to form any previous plan, but his conduct in difficulties was timid and irresolute. Enjoying every kind of influence over the Court, and possessing the confidence of the nation, to a degree no Minister before him had ever attained, with genius and rectitude he might have commanded any thing, for the restoration of credit, of the finances, and of authority; but, instead of producing any great effect, he only put forth in succession fractions of energy which were lost, whereas brought to bear together on the same point, and at the same moment, they might have prevented the ruin of the State.

Mr. Necker was tormented with a ceaseless desire of ruling France. It is hard to say whether this mania, half-factious, half-pedantic, was to be attributed to the general habits of the inhabitants of the town which gave him birth, or to a particular disposition running through his family. From the time of the famous *Statement, (Compte Rendu)* published in 1781, to the present day, scarcely a year has passed in which this family has not fallen upon Europe, with some new performance relative either to the finances, the administration, politics, literature, the passions, or religion. For me, who was well

acquainted with Mr. Necker, I should not be astonished if he had pushed this mania of perpetually engaging the public attention, so far as to have taken such steps, that for many a long year after his death, Europe should continue to be pestered with the posthumous works of the husband and wife.

There were many pious and charitable institutions in France, which had been founded successively by different Kings, assisted by the talents and zeal of the most distinguished or most pious persons of their time. These establishments improved and multiplied gradually, in proportion to the encrease of population, and the advancement of knowledge and wealth. I speak of the great number of hospitals founded in every part of France. In no country of the world, perhaps, England excepted, were there so many asylums for suffering humanity as in France. MARIA-ANTOINETTA had added her name to those of the generous benefactors of the people who preceded her. Through her influence two hospitals were founded at Versailles, which provided, without noise or show, the noblest and most abundant supplies to a certain number of sick persons and lying-in-women. Mad^{e}. Necker, impelled less by charity than vanity, by sensibility than a spirit of

opposition, took it into her head, in concert with her husband, to found one in Paris bearing her name: she published annually a ſtate of the expences of this hospital, with an affectation which might have been regarded as puerile, if it had not been factious. They did not fail to have inserted in all the journals of the times, associated with these annual statements, severe reflexions, of which the object was to show France, and particularly Paris, the difference there was between the attentions which were given to the poor by a virtuous citizen of the Republic of Geneva, and those they received from the hands of the Government in the general hospitals. It was a kind of constant appeal made to the passions of the poor against the pretended carelessness of the Government, and to the estimates of the philosophers against the defects of the Administration, which, at a greater expence, did not give their sick such good treatment as others received from a simple individual. The situation of the poor was certainly far from being comfortable in the receptacles into which they were crowded; but the King had made known his intention of remedying the evil, and did not even wait till the termination of the war, in which the kingdom was engaged, before he gave orders for erecting four new hospitals in the suburbs of Paris, to supply the

place of the general hospital, which was become inadequate to the population of the capital. The rich and charitable, on their part, contented themselves with secretly placing abundant alms for the poor of their parish in the hands of their clergy, without calling on the public to witness their beneficence, conforming to the precept of the Gospel, " let not thy left hand know what " thy right hand doeth !" But this secrecy would not have suited the Geneva Banker's wife, who was intent on regenerating France. It was necessary to the views of the husband and wife to make the people of Paris curse the *Hôtel-Dieu*, in order to make them bless the Necker-hospital and house, and to engage every pen in celebrating the charitable institutions of the two Republicans, at the expence of the pious foundations of sixty-six Kings.

I have dwelt on this fact, because I consider it as one of those by which it has been long attempted to alienate the affection of the French people from their Government, to divert it to foreign friends; and particularly as one of those by which great pains have been taken in late years to vilify the Nobility and Clergy, the natural protectors of the poor, but protectors delicate and secret, by representing, in the benevolence of a

Protestant family of the *Tiers-Etat*, more sense and generosity than in the first families of the kingdom. How detestable is that hypocrisy which thus, beneath the exterior of a false humanity and false philanthropy, conceals ambition and vanity!

Mr. Necker was called to the Ministry only to remove the embarrassment of the finances, under which the Archbishop of Sens had sunk; but he took advantage of his popularity with the Parisians, to presume to become the head and arbiter of the Council, from which he was formerly kept by Mr. de Vergennes and Mr. de Maurepas. He immediately left to a clerk the object for which he had been appointed; and while Mr. Dufresne negotiated some bills with the Paris bankers, to supply the Treasury, Mr. Necker assumed the cognizance of all affairs relative to the formation of the States-General, and to the reformation of the State; so that, as some one has before remarked, it appeared very comical to men of sound and peaceable minds that a foreigner, a Minister of the Finances, dared to arrogate and bring together before him questions which the Chancellor of France only was competent to determine: but the fury of the *Palais-Royal* made every thing at Court bend before the favourite Minister of the populace, who, in his

turn, constantly bent the knee before the populace of the *Palais-Royal.*

Mr. Necker's first care was to set the King against the two higher Orders of the State, and to insinuate to him, that the object of these, as well as of the Magistracy, in uniting to demand the convocation of the States-General, was to enfeeble the Royal authority; that it was requisite, as much as possible, to diminish the influence and preponderance of the two first Orders in the States-General, and to encrease that of the *Tiers-Etat,* by causing it to depute a number of representatives equal to that which the Clergy and Nobility together were to send; that the *Tiers-Etat* were essentially interested in the King's having a power sufficient to protect them against the oppression and designs of the two other Orders; that it was impossible to doubt that that interest, added to the gratitude for the favours and confidence which the King would manifest on this occasion to the *Tiers-Etat,* would induce them to assist very effectually the re-establishment of a solid and vigorous Government, without which the Monarchy was lost.

Unhappily there was no Minister in the Council possessed of sufficient energy to resist Mr.

Necker's advice. The presence of the man produced on this Council the effect of Medusa's head. It seemed to them, that he could in the twinkling of an eye shake and throw upon them all the serpents of the suburbs of Paris.

Mr. Necker and his partizans will never justify his administration of the double representation of the *Tiers*. An able and prudent Minister will always endeavour to keep the whole body of the State in harmony. It is this harmony that composed the French Government, and which composes every system of Monarchical Government. Till the interference of this Minister, all the ranks of society in France were animated with one spirit. In 1788, the two first Orders had given the greatest example of generosity and patriotism, by resisting some arbitrary attempts of a weak Minister, and by relinquishing all their pecuniary privileges. What more then could Mr. Necker hope, from putting into motion the *Tiers-Etat*, who till then had played no part? What did he mean by blowing the flame of discord? By raising the mass of the people against the two first Orders of the State? By creating an exclusive patriotism in that of the *Tiers?* By working a total change in the national sentiments? Was it a reform that he could expect? No, it was a revolution in so-

ciety. From the time of his first ministry, he had been odious to the Nobility and Clergy, and he resolved to be revenged upon them. He found the provinces of France governed for ages by the different authorities of Provincial States, or of Intendants; he was dissatisfied with these various customs and various institutions, which, though they sometimes hampered the measures of the Government, preserved nevertheless the body of it. Unfortunate in the first attempts he made to establish a uniform mode of administration in the Provinces, he resolved not to lose the opportunity of levelling France, and of entirely disorganizing it, in order to re-organize it afterwards in his own way.

The better to succeed in his object, he was not satisfied with forming a numerical balance of individuals, between the deputies of the *Tiers* and those of the other Orders; but fearful, no doubt, that the number of the discontented of the two first Orders would not be equal to that of the *Tiers*, who might continue faithful to Louis XVI. and the ancient laws of their country, he determined to secure a majority for the opposers of the Court, and for the enemies of what was called *the Aristocrats*, by introducing in the Order of the Clergy, a prodigious number of parish Ministers,

who could not fail in general to bring into the Assembly of the Nation the Presbyterian principles which had devastated his own country, and for more than a century desolated Great Britain, to which it seems he projected from that moment to assimilate France.

This was in a manner, on the part of Mr. Necker, declaring war against the King and Court, by exposing them to the attacks of democracy, and by thus raising for himself an army of mob-orators, whose General he hoped to remain. He presumed that it would be in his power to continue the elected and acting Sovereign of the French, in spite of the hereditary and passive Sovereign, whom he consented to leave upon the throne. He did not foresee that, in this army which he was about to assemble under his banners, there would be found some of those proud lieutenants who, as the great Corneille says, *have no leaders but in idea*. His self-love made him forget that a Frenchman is by nature vain and sarcastic. Accordingly, it was not long before he found in his terrible recruits, philosophers, who despised his politics; politicians, who execrated his philosophy; fierce men, who broke his yoke; literary men, who criticised his bombastic style; arrogant men, who

laughed at his impertinence; and men of vigorous minds, who made him feel his weakness. He was of course quickly compelled to quit the field of battle which he had covered with ruins, and to fly shamefully for an asylum to the foot of the Alps, carrying with him the indignation of some, and the contempt of others.

" Thus," said a writer very far from being attached to the Court of France, " to set up a " power really democratic by a majority, in a " national and legislative Assembly, was coolly " to commit, by the King's order, the follies of " the revolution of England, which having, by " crimes and acts of virulence, got rid of the " opposition of the Nobility and Clergy united " in the Upper House, and destroyed all the " Monarchical institutions established to check " the popular part of the constitution, led " Charles I. to the scaffold, when deprived of the " natural supports of Sovereignty. Thus, Mr. " Necker placed France in the position into " which England was thrown by the two first " scenes of its revolution; so that in the year " 1789, there was only this difference in the re- " volutions of England and France; that in Eng- " land the preponderance of the popular power " and the destruction of the Upper House were

" the result of hatred, of previous violence, and
" of all the sanguinary and furious passions of a
" revolution begun; while in France the doub-
" ling of the *Tiers*, and the destruction of the
" superior Chambers opposed to the absolute
" will of the people, were the cool, deliberate,
" and voluntary operations of the King himself,
" who signed in his Council a conspiracy against
" the French Monarchy, by the advice and influ-
" ence of only one of his Ministers."

On the 26th of December, 1788, Mr. Necker in the Council made the famous report on the doubling of the *Tiers-Etat*, the admission of the Parish Ministers in the Order of the Clergy, and the introduction of the Protestant interest in the representation of the *Tiers*. If these three measures, now generally condemned, were not the first causes of the Revolution, at least nobody will deny that they were among the principal means it had of unfolding itself.

I shall here conclude what I undertook to say on the remote and proximate causes of the Revolution. It it not without some uneasiness that I deliver the foregoing pages to the public. I declare, that I have sought sincerely and with good motives, materials for information on an

event of which the consequences were then so little foreseen, and of which even now it would be in vain to think of foreseeing the possible issues. If I have wounded any self-love, if I have recalled painful recollections, I have at least the consolation to find myself supported in all that I have said by the testimony of unsuspected men; and let me be permitted to cite one of them here from a publication printed in London a few years ago, by a distinguished Member of the Parliament of Paris, a Magistrate justly called to the Counsels of his King, one of the firmest defenders of the French Monarchy, and of the laws which formed the constitution of France: in the year 1796, the power of truth drew the following paragraph from the pen of Mr. d'Outremont:

" Alas! I know it but too well, the Parlia-
" ments, like all the other lawful bodies of the
" Monarchy, have incurred the disgrace of the
" nation. Perhaps they have to reproach them-
" selves with some faults. They became quar-
" relsome and captious, if I may use these ex-
" pressions. By intermeddling with too many
" things they harassed the nation, when they
" thought only of harassing the Government.
" They confounded a passive part given them by
" the Constitution with an active part, which

" could only prove prejudicial to themselves and " to the Royal authority. They compelled the " world to enquire into the title of their power, " and the enquiry was not always favourable to " them."*

A witness, as unsuspicious and unobjectionable as he whom I have just cited, would be found in that very Mr. d'Eprémesnil, whose resistance to the King's will, whose plots and imprisonment in the islands of Hyères, are detailed in the foregoing chapter. Attacked, in 1792, by the populace of Paris, for the firmness he had displayed in the National Assembly, and saved by a kind of miracle from the fury of that very populace, stripped of his clothes, and bathed in his blood, he wrote to the King, from the Abbaye, a letter, in which he acknowledged the guilty use he had made of his influence over his associates, and offered his blood to his Majesty as an expiation of his errors, and for the blood which had been already shed in the Revolution. As yet he thought not of all that was to be spilt in the course of the Revolution he had excited; and when he mounted the scaffold where Louis XVI. had perished, he

* *Le Nouveau Siècle*, ou *la France encore Monarchie*. Tom. II. Page 348, Londres 1796, imprimé par Baylis.

had, no doubt, less to suffer from the barbarity he experienced, than from the remembrance of his imprudences *.

May these two examples of repentance, on the part of two principal Members of the Magistracy of France, obtain for me the indulgence of those who are inclined to blame me for censuring so severely bodies which were so long the glory of France, and whose reputation was justly famous throughout Europe! Their glory was made complete by the courage with which they suffered death in the Revolution, for the firm and loyal protestations which they made against the innovations of the Constituent Assembly. If they accelerated the fall of the Monarchy, by calling imperiously for the States-General, and by assembling the nation without reflecting that it was not in a state to allow of a revolution; they at least acknowledged their error, lamented their

* It would be a piece of false delicacy to omit here a saying of the Queen's, so well known at the Court. The opposition of Mr. d'Eprémesnil to whatever was proposed by the Court, was so obstinate, and looked for with such certainty, that when a purchase of a new dress was mentioned to the Queen, or when her Majesty was solicited for any favour: "Oh," said she, gaily, "I must first know whether I shall have the consent of Mr. d'Eprémesnil!"

faults, and when they could no longer support the Throne, buried themselves under its ruins.

Thus too, was the author of the inflammatory memoir on the States-General, of which I have cited some passages, the first to disavow his own doctrine, from the moment he was admitted to those States. As soon as he saw how they were composed, he quitted them with horror, and hid himself in the heart of Germany, where, ever since the year 1789, he has laboured unceasingly by his services to make the King of France forget the mischief which may have been the result of his former opinions.

It is not to be denied, then, that scarcely any one was free from error, in the origin of the Revolution; many are the causes that brought it on, but there are none which can be said to have been the principal one. For upwards of fifty years anarchy has been in every head, fermentation in every mind: it would have required a superior force to prevent the explosion. The thing, however, was not impossible; and if any one can be charged with not having tried it, I do not hesitate publicly, in the face of Europe and to posterity, to charge the constantly factious administration of the King's last Minister of the

Finances. It was the duty of Mr. Necker to instruct the people, he fawned upon them; to fortify the Royal authority, he weakened it; to resist the torrent of popular passions, he opened all the sluices of it; to restore harmony among all the parts of the constitutional Monarchy of France, he let them all loose against one another; to supply the deficit; he confessed that he could have done it easily, but that he could not relinquish the happiness of seeing the King surrounded by the representatives of his people. It can never be an excuse for a Prime Minister to say, that he did not foresee the consequences of a measure deliberately adopted. From the instant he accepts the office, he becomes responsible for all the evils he does not know how to prevent. Mr. Necker's perpetually speaking of his character in his own writings, was not enough to make us believe him; he should have displayed that character in his administration; and certainly there were not wanting noble and great occasions for devoting himself for the State*, if he had had one

* Demosthenes did not talk of his *character* to the people of Athens. He gave proofs of it every day by putting them upon their guard against the snares of Philip, in those noble speeches which will be admired to the latest posterity: nor was the bust of this great man ever paraded in the Ceramicus of Athens with that of Philip.

drop of blood that beats in a hero's heart; if he had been susceptible of a single impulse like those which caused Chevalier d'Assas, ready to perish, to cry out, *à moi, Auvergne, ce sont les ennemis*; *here, Auvergne, these are the enemies*; which prompted the French Chevalier to take as a motto, *potius mori quam fœdari*; and which made the King of Sweden say to MARIA ANTOINETTA, *when you have occasion for my sword, Madam, Gustavus will be your Knight.* But Mr. Necker proved that all his energy was at the end of his pen, and that his only talent consisted in striking with accuracy the balance of an account-current. It is impossible at this day to think, without shuddering with indignation, of the arrogant presumption of a Genevese banker, Republican, and Protestant, who, brought up in the principles peculiar to these four designations, dared to believe himself worthy of regenerating a Monarchy of fourteen hundred years, for which he could have but a feigned affection; of supporting a Court, against which he conceived he had an insult to resent; and of maintaining a Religion, the foundations of which had been unceasingly attacked for two centuries by his countrymen and friends. Royalty found a traitor where it should have found a supporter; a Minister, the more dangerous, as he paralysed every thing in the Council, in the

Royal Family, and at Court, by the influence of his popularity. A Minister, worthy of his rank, a Matthew Molé, would have made use of that very popularity to stop the fury of the passions of the multitude. He would have formed the public opinion, instead of following, under the mask of that name, the opinion of the wicked, and of the most corrupt men of the most corrupt capital of Europe. He would have stood their assaults, he would have borrowed the words of Themistocles, and told them *to strike if they would, but hear.* As for Mr. Necker, he could only bend before them, and anticipate their will.

——— Magno in populo cum sæpe coorta est
Seditio, sœvit que animis ignobile vulgus;
Jamque faces et saxa volant; furor arma ministrat:
Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si fortè virum quem
Conspexêre, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant.
Ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet*.

Thus there only wanted a man to put bounds, by the influence of his virtues and talents, to the rage for political discussions that had been intro-

* When sedition takes place among a great people, the populace become furious; torches and stones fly about; rage furnishes arms: in the midst of this fury let a man appear who is respectable for his virtue and actions, the tumult ceases, and they stand listening to him while he speaks. He directs their spirit, he calms their passions.

duced into the French nation; to the Anglomania that had taken possession of the minds of men; to the relaxation of religious principles generally shaken; and to put an end to those scenes of discord exhibited by all the chief bodies of the State. Mr. Necker could and ought to have been that man. The King's love of order and tranquillity, the deference of the other Ministers towards him whom they saw possessing so eminent a degree of popular favour, put it fully in his power. Instead of seizing these advantages, he fomented the feuds already existing, he opened new fields of battle in which all dignities were to be disputed by arms; the high and the low, the Notables and the Electors, the Parliaments, the three Orders, he set all at war with one another; he divided the Clergy themselves into two classes, and, not satisfied with opposing the inferior Clergy to the Bishops, he besides raised a common enemy to both, by introducing into the legislative body persons professing a different belief from theirs, and from that of the generality of the nation. Yet he had long boasted that he had wished to take England for a model! And could he be ignorant that in England the Constitution has wisely guarded against the disorders of such a confusion, by admitting into the Legislature only such persons as are of the same

faith as the Sovereign? In a word, Mr. Necker, intending to make light, made a chaos; he threw wider open the portals of the caverns which contained the revolutionary tempests; and the Revolution at length burst forth; because Louis XVI. after having a prodigal Minister, had the misfortune to have a weak one, and lastly a factious one.

I shall not speak here of the *déficit* in the annual revenue. The full meaning of that word has never been well understood. It was in one year stated by Ministers, Notables, Parliaments, at 175, 150, and 110 millions only; and nothing could exceed the surprise that was raised when Mr. Necker was heard to declare, in the speech he made at Versailles on the opening of the States-General, that it did not amount to more than 56 millions *tournois*, (2,300,000l. sterling,) adding, if not exactly in the words at least in similar terms, that to make it up would be but *child's play* to him! a mixture of cruelty, mockery, and bombast.

I cannot reflect at present on the dreadful evils that came out of this new box of Pandora, without looking back to the prosperous circumstances which attended France at that period. A revenue of near 600 millions *tournois* (25,000,000l.

sterling) was collected, without pressure, from the French nation. There was not a branch of national industry that was not daily making a progress; the arts had arrived at the highest degree of perfection; luxury and opulence were spread every where; and the French artists were the first in Europe. In common, it is the nation that raises statues to their Sovereigns, whereas Louis XVI. caused them himself every year to be erected to the subjects of his ancestors, and the chissel produced works worthy of the noble impulse. The art of printing, by the King's order, supplied for the Dauphin's education perfect editions of the French and Latin Classics, at present the ornament of all libraries; a commercial balance of seventy millions, adding yearly that sum to the considerable quantity of specie before in the kingdom, spread ease through all the channels of circulation; a single colony, that of St. Domingo, in a territory not equal to more than the fourteenth part of France, yielded at that time a produce equal to the fifth of that arising from landed property in the mother country; and the plantations which were settling in 1788 would, in five years, have raised the proportion to one third of the produce of the lands of France. Bordeaux, Nantes, Lyons, Marseilles, Havre, were decorated with numerous

palaces and other noble monuments. The Sovereigns of Europe, allured into France by the fame of its splendour, went from enchantment to enchantment: the Ambassadors of Tippoo Saib, landing at Toulon, and crossing France from South to North in their way to Paris, and from East to West on the banks of the Loire, in their way to Brest, where they embarked for India, thought the fairy lands of the Arabian and Persian romances realized to their senses. In a word, public wealth was at its height when this wretched *déficit*, which would have been a *plaything* to a man of any talent, comes and overturns it; as the feeble insect, that sticks to the bottom of the largest ships, produces insensibly the fatal leak which sinks them, if the commander neglects to stop it in time.

After the Revolution separated me from my August Benefactress, and deprived me of her, I lived some years in England. At my arrival, I found the public debt three times larger than that which had juſt crushed the throne of France. I have since seen, in the course of ten years, a new debt formed in Great-Britain, of which the interest alone is twelve times greater than the whole *déficit* declared by Mr. Necker. Yet Great-Britain, possessing scarcely more than half of the popu-

lation of France, has not only provided for all her own wants, but has also during that period furnished subsidies to almost all the Sovereigns of Europe*; and two successive years of scarcity compelled her to remit to foreign countries upwards of 20 millions of her money; there has been however no revolution in England, and while I am writing, she is the power that opposed the Revolution longest and with most success. But it must be confessed at the same time, that the affairs of Great-Britain have not been managed by a Minister who was a foreigner, a republican, or one whose faith was different from that of his Master: the First Lord of his Britannic Majesty's Treasury did not flatter the passions of the multitude assembled in 1793, at Copenhagen-House, in order to have a new constitution; far from forming his opinion on that of the corrupt and pragmatic men of the three kingdoms, Mr. Pitt had the skill to form the public opinion on his own.

It is thus that able Ministers preserve empires in the most difficult crisis, while ignorant, weak,

* England during the Revolution has given subsidies to the King of Sardinia, the King of Prussia, his Imperial Majesty, the Stadholder, the King of Naples, the Elector of Bavaria, the Duke of Wurtemberg; to Portugal, Russia, Swisserland, and a number of German Princes.

corrupt, or merely presumptuous Ministers sacrifice them to the slightest obstacle. With this parallel I shall conclude my observations on Mr. Necker. Though at the beginning of the second chapter, I noticed only three chief and immediate causes of the French Revolution; namely, the disorder of the finances, the bent of men's minds, and the exaggerated ideas of patriotism copied from the English and Americans, the active and efficient cause of its developement is to be referred to the acts and omissions of the three Ministers of the King, Calonne, Loménie, and Necker*.

* As Mr. Necker has had such great influence on what has happened in Europe for twenty years past, his character and his talents have found detractors and panegyrists equally violent. The following picture of this Minister was drawn in a work that made a great deal of noise at the beginning of the Revolution. Those who judge of men and things by effects will find the resemblance just enough.

" Then appeared on the great stage of affairs a man become unhappily too famous; Necker, one of those lucky beings, whom blind fortune sometimes delights in raising through sheer caprice.

" Born of an obscure class, brought up in a compting-house; without genius, without attraction, without that smoothness, which at the time he made his way was the first recommendation,

I now quit altogether this lamentable subject of the remote, immediate, and efficient causes of the

he succeeded to open a road to honours. His unbridled ambition, thorough conviction of his own merit, and insolent pride, persuaded him that no one was worthier of them. A real Narcissus, he always admired himself with complacency, and never admired any body but himself. He constantly magnified himself and diminished others. He said boldly, and made others say, that he was the first man on earth. Of this he absolutely persuaded a numerous retinue of proselytes whom he kept about him, and whom he did not suffer to deviate from what he dictated to them. Submission to his orders and decisions was the sole title to his favour, and the fortune of his admirers was always proportioned to the homage and worship they paid to his divinity.

" Void of virtue, while he spoke only of virtue; void of religion, while he wrote in favour of religion; void of principles, while he dwelt on the principles of morality; void of honour, while he affected every great sentiment; vain of his knowledge in administration, while he censured that of others; wicked, authoritative, impudent, assisted by the most mischievous, the most intriguing, the most hypocritical of women, one the least delicate in the means of obtaining her end, he at length gained the eminence whence he could give France the terrible blows he had been meditating, and of which the present Revolution has been the effect.

" The public voice, or, to speak more accurately, the cries of his partizans, pointed him out to Mr. Maurepas, who was at a loss where to find a Minister for the finances. He associated him with the person to whom they were trusted, giving him the title of Director, and after the voluntary resignation of Mr.

French Revolution previous to the year 1789, and come to the juncture of the opening of the States-

Taboureau, who was too honest a man to agree with such an associate, he was put at the head of this Department. He filled the place without the title of Minister, from which as a foreigner, and on account of the difference of his religion, he was excluded by the laws of the kingdom.

" In accepting the object he ardently wished, by one of those artful tricks which were always seen through in spite of him in the course of his elevation, he refused the immense emoluments attached to it. This unparalleled disinterestedness was cried up to the skies by himself and his confidants, and every where celebrated with all the energy he and his cabal possessed.

" None but fools, however, were surprized at his conduct. It was well known that a banker, a Geneva banker, Necker especially, the most covetous of the bankers of his country, could not refuse money without a certainty of making more by the refusal. No one who had a grain of understanding was deceived. His mercantile house was still maintained, and Germani, his brother, and the partnership, did more business than almost all the other bankers of Paris together.

" It must be left to persons conversant in the turning of money to say, to what may amount the profits of a house, the head of which is at the same time Minister of the Finances of a great State, which he conducts as a bank; who shares in all the operations carried on in that State, who often furnishes the means for them, and who has it in his power to order those which may bring him in the most. It is easy for him then to make a show by giving up a sum which he is sure to find returned to him a hundred fold.

General, to attend and quit no more the unfortunate MARIA-ANTOINETTA during the remain-

" If Necker had been the only person who seized the spoils of France, his reign would have been of no long duration, and the eyes of the public, fixed upon him, would very soon have detected the riches he amassed. More adroit, he called in his countrymen by preference to share them with him. He talked to them of loans and other matters of that kind, and proposed to them to take a part in them. Accustomed to the terms of their art, they understood him at the first word, and conceived it perfectly. They felt that in other words he said to them: " I will connect you with my profits, but on con-" dition that I share with you those which I shall enable " you to make; they will be considerable enough to satisfy " you notwithstanding this retribution. I will do better still; " you shall enter into the Government, and I will make you " so necessary that it will never be possible again to turn you " out. Your fortune shall be rapid, great, and secured for " ever; but on condition that I shall be always your head, " your God; that you invoke, that you adore only me; that " you openly manifest your respect, and that you omit no " means of spreading it."

" Here is the source of the attachment of all the moneyed people, of all the stock-jobbers, of all those locusts, that have devoured France for this Necker, their father, protector, and idol. It was he who introduced into its bosom that faction, who from the first moment of their existence laboured to ruin and overturn the State: it was he who fostered, governed, and supported them. They were the first instruments of his ambition and of his crimes; he was always sure of their fidelity.

der of her life. I will no more even turn my eyes on this Revolution, but to select the periods of her successive misfortunes, and consequently the sources of those proofs of courage she displayed.

From the end of the American war, that is to say, from the year 1783, MARIA-ANTOINETTA ceased to be happy. From that period to the end of the year 1789, her sensibility experienced a series of attacks, by which it should seem that Providence thought proper to prove her great soul, and prepare it for the terrible blows to which she was doomed, and which were to cut short her days in so cruel a manner.

" Such was the man who was charged with the most important affairs of the kingdom; such was the treacherous serpent to whom Louis XVI. ever upright, ever persuaded of the probity of others whom he judged of from himself, gave his ear, on the dangerous recommendation of the Prime Minister who had brought him forward, and whose pernicious counsels he followed. Who shall dare to reproach the King, then twenty-five years old, for trusting to a man whom all France considered as an oracle, in favour of whom so general was the prepossession that one scarcely dared to avow sentiments contrary to his, and to attempt to prove whose daily treachery was a crime? France! wilt thou never be cured of placing foreigners at thy head? Could a banker, a subject of the most turbulent Republic on earth, the least instructed in thy laws and customs, be proper for thy Government?"

The Governess of her children, the Princess de Rohan-Guémenée, suffered at this time a reverse of fortune which prevented her remaining any longer at the Court of France. MARIA-ANTOINETTA was extremely attached to this Princess, who executed her charge with all the fidelity and zeal its importance required. Madame de Guémenée was the more to be pitied, as the blow that crushed her was brought on by circumstances in which she took no part, and which were unknown to her; and as it had not been in her power either to foresee or to prevent the disorder which fraudulent and usurious transactions had suddenly introduced into her husband's affairs. She quitted the Queen and the august children who had been under her care, loaded with tokens of kindness, and with assurances of their Majesties' attachment. Though this separation put it in the Queen's power to give a young lady of the Court a great proof of the affection which she had felt for her for some time, her Majesty was not the less affected by the misfortune of Mad^e. de Guémenée, and of the illustrious family to which she belonged*.

* The debts of the Prince de Guémenée, reduced to a just statement, were much below the value of his immense property in possession, and that to which he was heir. But if he was the

I am here to speak of that friendship, so rare, so precious, so cordial, which subsisted between MARIA-ANTOINETTA and the Duchess of Polignac; of that friendship, which could not suffer one friend to survive the other; of that affection, whose purity, liveliness, and tragic end surpass all the examples, and even all the prodigies, of a similar nature, heard of among the ancients.

> O divine Friendship! happiness complete!
> Sole passion of the mind in which excess
> Is lovely!

Well did the Queen know what belongs to thee, and how to obey thy sacred laws! Who, in future, crawling in the mire of the filthy scribblers of

victim of his agents, his creditors experienced the advantage of having to do with families in which honour was implanted. The Countess de Marsan, born a Rohan, who had been Governess to Louis XVI. and his brothers, proved on this occasion, that she was worthy both of the name she took by birth, and of the august family of Lorraine to which she had allied herself. She immediately gave up a great part of her immense fortune to the most distressed of her nephew's creditors, and went into a Convent.

The Prince de Guémenée died in 1802, carrying on a mechanical business in a village of Switzerland, being determined not to continue a burden on his family. All the newspapers have given an account of the brilliant manner in which his two sons served, during the last war, in the Austrian armies.

the times, will attempt to calumniate an affection so pure, so celestial, I had almost said so holy, in sight of the tomb into which the two victims of their friendship were precipitated at once?

Gabrielle-Yolande-Martine de Polastron, the wife of Count Jules de Polignac, belonged through her husband to the ancient and noble family of Polignac, of the Province of Auvergne, which gave birth to that illustrious Cardinal who was author of the immortal poem of *l'Anti-Lucrèce*, for which he seems to have borrowed the pen of the Mantuan Swan, and whose able negotiations supply all who enter on the diplomatic career with models as perfect as those which the purity of his poetry and of his principles offers to men of letters and philosophers.

Mr. and Mad^e^. de Polignac had been, according to custom, presented at Court some time after their marriage. The Countess was there distinguished in a particular manner. In her the noblest soul was painted on the noblest countenance. The elegance of Mr. de Polignac was no less remarkable. Mad^e^. de Polignac's conversation, at once modest, sprightly, and agreeable, pleased MARIA-ANTOINETTA extremely; she danced gracefully, sung with taste, her mind was highly

cultivated: thus accomplished, it was impossible that she should not gain the Queen's affection; consequently she was soon admitted to her Majesty's circle, and to the entertainments and concerts which she gave at Versailles and Trianon. Those entertainments, which a shameless priest * has recently dared to represent as similar to the scandalous orgies, in which he perhaps bore his part in his revolutionary career; those entertainments which my august benefactress permitted me to attend whenever I wished it, presented enchanting assemblages of the most charming women and most amiable men of the Court. When music was given the most distinguished men of the profession were invited; and never shall I forget that, in the midst of these parties, MARIA-ANTOINETTA, surpassing in lustre the most brilliant women, and the most celebrated amateurs in skill, appeared less the Queen of France than the Queen of Beauty, the Sovereign of the Arts.

Let me be permitted to quit my narrative a moment for a digression, which may naturally be admitted in this place, as MARIA-ANTOINETTA is the subject of it.

* L'Abbé Soulavie.

France prides herself at present, and justly, on possessing the first Lyrical Theatre of Europe. The master-pieces of music with which the collection of the Royal Academy of Paris * has been enriched for fifteen years past, secure it an incontestable superiority over those of all other capitals. This justice is paid to it by all travellers and people of taste. It would be very difficult, not to say impossible, to estimate the sums which this dramatic pre-eminence has drawn to Paris, and scattered over France, by the concourse of opulent strangers which it has contributed to bring or detain in the country. Now, it is a fact which every one must acknowledge, that the music of France, before the arrival of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, was semi-barbarous. This science was still in its infancy, while all the others had passed the period of their maturity. As soon as MARIA-ANTOINETTA had been at the Opera, she resolved to improve the national taste. To her it is, to her enlightened love of the Arts, that France is indebted for the revolution which was then effected in music. She it was who brought from Vienna to Paris, who encouraged, who protected against all cabals, the Chevalier Gluck, who had had the honour to give her lessons, and who was

* The Opera.

the first that could place the dagger of Melpomene into the hands of Euterpe. He gave to the serious Opera the true tone of Tragedy. Boileau said of the Opera of his day:

> Jusqu'à *je vous hais*, tout s'y dit tendrement.
> And e'en *I hate you* glides a tender strain.

A critique which, with very few exceptions, was still applicable to the Opera, as MARIA-ANTOINETTA found it at her arrival in France. In a few years it felt her happy influence; and could Boileau have revisited the world, he would have found that my illustrious countryman, Gluck, as poetical in his music as Corneille and Racine were harmonious in their poetry, had in his Operas put in practice the precepts of the Legislator of Parnassus, and that at his touch, *each passion spoke its proper language.* MARIA-ANTOINETTA not only invited to Paris the genius who was the boast of Vienna, but also those excellent composers whose works were the delight of Italy. Piccini and Sacchini were desired and encouraged by MARIA-ANTOINETTA to come and enrich the French stage. In this they succeeded, by following the path marked out by the German Orpheus; and if the competition of these three celebrated masters occasioned some warm disputes among the

French, it at least proved useful to the art. In fact, it is to that fermentation, and to the discussions it produced, that the world are indebted for those master-pieces *Dido*, *Œdipus*, *Armida*, and *Alcestes*, which will remain for ever the glory of the Lyrical Theatre of Paris, and be lasting models for future artists. This is one of the permanent benefits which France has derived from MARIA-ANTOINETTA. As long as the French are sensible of the effects of harmony, of the charms of melody; as long as a taste for the beautiful prevails in France, it will be as impossible to forget the fifteen years reign of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, as it is now to forget the glorious age of Louis XIV.; and perhaps the favourites of Euterpe, in speaking of the period when *that magic spectacle in which poetry, dancing, and music combine a hundred pleasures in one* *, attained its greatest glory, will one day call it *the Age of* MARIA-ANTOINETTA.

Alas! far was the great Master who had directed the taste of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, the feeling Gluck, from thinking, when he made Orestes and Pylades breathe the sweetest accents of

* Ce spectacle magique
Où les beaux vers, la danse, et la musique,
De cent plaisirs font un plaisir unique.

friendship in his immortal Opera of Iphigenia in Taurida, when he produced them for the first time at the Countess of Polignac's, previous to their being heard in public; far was he, I say, from thinking that those accents might one day be applicable to his august pupil and her interesting friend. Bearing MARIA-ANTOINETTA perpetually in my remembrance, I have never been able to hear without tears the following melodious and sublime passage of Gluck:

Le sort nous fait périr ensemble;
N'en accuse point la rigueur;
La mort même est une faveur,
Puisque le tombeau nous rassemble*.

Her Majesty, desirous of fixing near her person the Countess de Polignac, the friend of whom her heart had made choice, and knowing that she possessed but a moderate fortune, that she already had two children, and that living at Court was expensive, determined, after consulting the King, to give the reversion of the office of her First Equery to the Count de Polignac, the Count de Tessé, who held it at the time, having no children.

* As it is our fate to fall together, charge it not with rigour; for death is a favour, the grave being the gate to our everlasting union.

This favour was not solicited by Mad^e^. de Polignac. It was entirely owing to the affection which MARIA-ANTOINETTA had for her, and of which she was happy to have it in her power to give her a proof. The Countess had made no use of the favour she enjoyed, but to solicit from the King's justice a maintenance for the Countess d'Andlau, her aunt, who had been a mother to her, and had carefully brought her up from her earliest infancy. This lady had a very small income. She was the widow of a Lieutenant-General, whose services had deservedly obtained him the promise of being made a Mareschal of France on the first promotion; a promise, the fufilling of which his death had prevented, and consequently she had no right to the usual pension paid to the widows of the Mareschals of France. Louis XVI. and the Queen, on the request of the young Countess, were eager to make amends to the Countess d'Andlau, by granting her a pension of six thousand livres.

The kindness of the Queen enjoyed by Mad^e^. de Polignac excited the jealousy of several noble families, who were ambitious of fixing on themselves the attachment and favours of her Majesty. But Mad^e^. de Polignac's rivals did not, like her, possess the grace which attracts, the decorum

which attaches, and the reason which preserves true friends. Mad^e. de Polignac possessed a sound judgment, a penetrating mind, much discernment, great coolness, and, above all, great discretion. Her words and actions were watched on all sides, yet she never gave occasion to the shafts of envy or of intrigue; as ambition had nothing to do in the friendship she had acquired, it was easy for her to preserve it.

Once a design was formed to alarm her on the constancy of the Queen's attachment, and some officious persons went to apprize her that MARIA-ANTOINETTA had bestowed distinguished marks of favour on some of the ladies of her circle. She replied coolly and mildly: "I have too high an "opinion of the Queen to suspect that she will "withdraw herself from a friend of whom she "made choice, and with whose tenderness and "attachment she is acquainted. I am not afraid "of being robbed of her affection; but if it "were so, if the Queen should cease to love me, "I should grieve for the loss of my friend, but "I would take no steps to preserve the favours "of one who should be no more to me than my "Sovereign."

The Countess de Polignac had a daughter eleven years old, respecting whom the Queen,

with her usual grace, said to her mother: " shortly, " no doubt, you will be thinking of marrying " your daughter; when your choice is fixed, re- " member that the King and I take upon ourselves " the wedding present." Of those who offered, the Count de Grammont was chosen. There was not a nobler name at Court. On his marriage with Mademoiselle de Polignac, the King allowed him to take the title of Duke de Guiche, and made him Captain of his Guards. The conduct of the Duke de Guiche on the 5th of October, the continual proof of fidelity and attachment which for twenty years past he has given, and still gives, to the Royal Family of France, demonstrate how worthy he was of the favours of his Sovereigns, and how grateful he has been for them. The sublime devotion of the two elder sons of the Duchess of Polignac, in the flower of youth, and in the most critical circumstances of the Revolution, show likewise to what a pitch the all-powerful ascendancy of MARIA-ANTOINETTA exalted the gratitude of the families whom she honoured with her affection. Eleven years have passed since her death. The young sons of Mad^e. de Polignac, emigrants since the year 1789, had scarcely had a glimpse of that Queen who had adopted them. It was no longer in their power to do any thing for her, but for her blood they could spill their own; the heirs to

the Crown remained, and she left a daughter called to represent her one day on the Throne of France. They inherited their mother's attachment to these august relations. All Europe has witnessed the deplorable issue of the sublime enthusiasm which carried the Counts Armand and Jules de Polignac into France, in the month of January 1804. Is this a common affection? Are these suspicious ties, which are thus continued beyond the grave, and entail devotion and gratitude unalienably?

I shall here perhaps be charged with anticipating events, and confounding times. Indeed, I prepare to speak of the misfortunes of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, and while I write, fresh misfortunes occur to my mind. MARIA-ANTOINETTA dies again in the blows now given to her friends. It is natural that my feelings and my recollections should intermix; that dates and epochas should appear confused to my eyes, weakened by the tears I have shed, drowned in those I still shed every day.

The King who, as well as the Queen, had conceived an attachment for the family of Polignac, approved of the idea suggested by her

Majesty of granting the title of hereditary Duke to Count Jules. The Queen observed: " that " it would be a proof to the public of the esteem " with which he had inspired them, and be the " means of securing in part the fortunes of his " children." The Queen, with a grace peculiar to herself, informed Count Jules de Polignac of this new favour.

The Princess de Rohan-Guémenée, having resigned the office of Governess to the children of France, the Queen was desirous of confiding it to friendship. Mad^e. de Polignac trembled to accept the important charge: she was not ignorant how many competitors of the first families of France wished for it, and consequently to what jealousies she should be exposed; but her gratitude, and the devotion she had sworn to the Queen, left her no alternative, and she accepted it. The delicate health of the Dauphin, who was then but a year old, rendered the duties of the new Governess very painful. She was in constant apprehension for the life of the infant, who was the delight of the Queen, and the hope of France. In three years after her appointment, the birth, first of another Prince, and then of another Princess, encreased her cares.



Louis XVII, Roi de France

It was their Majesties' will, that the Duchess de Polignac should maintain a state worthy the charge with which she was invested, and that her house should be open to all foreigners of distinction, and all the nobility at the Court. The Queen wished too, that there should be days appropriated to smaller companies selected by herself, in which she might pass more pleasing and tranquil hours. It was in these she said, like Henry IV: *I am no longer Queen, I am myself.* What an expression in the mouth of a Sovereign!

Their Majesties were too just not to see that the slender income of the Duc de Polignac, and the salary attached to the Duchess's office, were not adequate to the extraordinary expences attending the state they maintained at Court. The King granted them a pension of eighty thousand livres to be continued to the survivor, and soon after appointed the Duke Director of the Posts and *Haras* of the kingdom, a place which he did not enjoy more than a year and a half. The suppression of this office was one of the first that signalized the entrance of the Archbishop of Toulouse into administration, and it gave MARIA-ANTOINETTA the opportunity of making the following admirable remark to those whom the changes reached: "No one has a right to com-

" plain, as the King has begun the reform with the
" place of one of the persons most dear to us."

Such was the friendship that united through life MARIA-ANTOINETTA and the Duchess de Polignac. An affection as pure on the one side as disinterested on the other, on which I have seen calumny pour out all its venom, and hatred discharge all its shafts. To believe the libellers of the times, Mad^e. de Polignac must have been one of the causes of the deficit of the finances, and yet she left the Court without fortune, and hardly able to collect the means of paying the travelling expences for her emigration, and that of her family.

What a consolation was it to MARIA-ANTOINETTA, in the last years of her reign, to possess a friend, in whose bosom she might pour the tears drawn from her by the malicious accusations of which she was the object! Mad^e. de Polignac carefully concealed the fears that agitated her bosom, seemed unconcerned in order to relieve the Queen's uneasiness, supported her spirits, and represented to her that with firmness and mildness, the most misled minds might yet be reclaimed.

It is incumbent on me to take notice, and refute the reasons, of the sudden inveteracy which was manifested at Court and in town against the unfortunate MARIA-ANTOINETTA.

Shortly after the convulsion of the war, when France, victorious, at peace, aggrandized, appeared to have attained the highest degree of prosperity, the Queen thought she might require the execution of one of the articles of her marriage-contract, in which it was stipulated that she should have a private establishment of her own. All the Queens of France before her had had one, and the propriety of it is too apparent to make it necessary for me to speak here of the building of the Palace of the Luxembourg, where Mary de Medicis fixed her residence after the death of Henry IV. or of the purchases of domains and separate palaces for several other Queens. MARIA-ANTOINETTA cast her eyes on the palace of St. Cloud, belonging to the house of Orléans, to be purchased for her. The salubrity of the air at that beautiful place, so important to the health of the precious pledges she had given to the State, its charming situation between Paris and Versailles, the custom that had made it a kind of public garden for the Parisians, and the pleasure of being on holidays, when it was crowded, amidst her subjects, like a

mother in the midst of a beloved family, determined the preference given by the Queen to St. Cloud. She wished however to know, before the purchase was concluded, whether the situation of the finances would allow of it. How is it possible to think that the Queen could have been upon her guard against the deceitful assurances of a Minister, who, to the few demands she made of him, always replied in a manner so delicate and amiable: "If what your Majesty "desires be possible, it is done; if impossible, it "shall be done." Was it for MARIA-ANTOINETTA to doubt the assertions of the Minister of the Finances, and to investigate at that time whether there was a *deficit* or not?

The purchase of St. Cloud was concluded for six millions of livres (144,000l. sterling); the necessary repairs of the palace, and the things requisite to the fitting of it up suitably to the reception of the Royal Family of France, created, it is true, an addition to the original purchase; yet St. Cloud was furnished less with magnificence than with taste; and if it were necessary for me to give a proof of this, I should only have to say, that it has not been found sufficiently splendid by those who have since taken possession of this royal abode.

I shall ever remember the delight of the public, who crowded those enchanting gardens, where the Queen and her children rode about in an open carriage, amidst the general acclamations and blessings. St. Cloud, at those times, presented the picture of a great family meeting; no kind of fears kept off the curious; the apartments, the gardens, the hearts of the august inhabitants, were all open to the French.

Shall I here speak of that scandalous anecdote of the famous diamond-necklace, which made so much noise in France, and throughout Europe; of that shameful intrigue which compromised so many illustrious persons, and poisoned so cruelly the last years of the reign of MARIA-ANTOINETTA? Alas! I was a spectator of that scene, of the agitation it caused, of the measures it gave rise to, of the tears it produced. How difficult was it, in the surprize created by the sudden disclosure of a plot in which the Queen's name was so strangely mixed, of a plot of which the ramifications were unknown, to preserve a due moderation either in sorrow, or in punishment! A Prince of the Empire, a Prince of the Church, a Grand Almoner of France, in a word, the Cardinal de Rohan was suddenly arrested in the palace of Versailles, on the day of the Assumption, at the

instant he had concluded the duties of his office. He was carried off to the Bastille by two officers of the guards. It is known that he gave an order in German to one of his servants to go and direct a confidential Secretary to burn some papers; it is known that he was brought before their Majesties; that, being interrogated by the King on a serious fact, he hesitated; that having requested time to recollect himself, and to answer in writing the accusations made against him, he could neither write nor reply satisfactorily: yet, at first, people would only see in this extraordinary affair an instance of the Queen's vengeance, on a man who was supposed to have offended her by some indiscreet expressions he had made use of, previous to her marriage with the Dauphin. The first blows of malice were levelled at MARIA-ANTOINETTA; and the Baron de Breteuil, then Minister of the King's House, who, in the excess of his zeal and devotion to the Royal Family, forgot that the illustrious prisoner committed to his charge had been formerly his political rival, and that that circumstance alone, independently of the high dignities of the accused, and of the caution due to the delicate situation of their Majesties, required on his part less noise, and forms less severe, in the execution of the orders that were given to him. It was not till after a

considerable time, and a solemn trial, that it was known that the Cardinal de Rohan, misled by the desire of conciliating the Queen's favour, had, with a credulity more shameful than criminal, listened to the tales with which he had been rocked out of his senses by an abandoned woman. All Europe rung with the noise of this swindling trick, unparalleled in the annals of the world, by which the Cardinal was drawn in, to buy a diamond necklace of immense value, with an idea that this superb ornament was destined for the Queen. It is known how this Prelate was fooled on the terrace in the garden of Versailles, where, in the dusk of the evening, he received a rose and a few words, expressive of satisfaction, from a wretched creature who had been taken from the stews, and whom the Cardinal was simple enough to believe to be the Queen of France. It is needless to repeat here, the name, origin, intrigues, manners, sentence, punishment, imprisonment, flight to London, and death, of that woman *de la Motte*, who took advantage of some favours which were granted to her importunities, to pass herself for a person of great influence at Court, and to meditate, and then perpetrate, the most audacious robbery ever conceived. It is still well remembered with what art was introduced into this affair one of those mystic cheats who appear

from time to time on the theatre of the world, making for a short time illustrious dupes, and what pains were taken to make greater confusion in an affair already sufficiently confused, by bringing into it the famous Italian juggler, who called himself Count de Cagliostro, son of the Grand Master of Malta, Pinto, grandson of the Shérif of Mecca, and heir of the Empire of Trebisond; while in fact he was only an old Neapolitan lacquey, and the son of a village barber. The curious preserve those cabalistical and unintelligible memoirs which appeared at the time, as well as the atrocious libels published at Paris and London by the woman who laid that whole plot of iniquities. It required all the discernment of the strict and inflexible Magistrates of the Parliament of Paris, and proceedings which lasted nearly a year, to unravel the truth amidst the clouds of every kind used to envelop the innocence of the Queen. But in vain was the sentence dictated by equity, in vain did the succeeding events unfold this mystery of wickedness, the blow was given, the pretext was furnished, and the enemies of MARIA-ANTOINETTA were too happy to find food for their hatred in this infamy, to suffer so favourable an occasion to pass of embittering her life, and of placing her in a false light, in the eyes of the French. MARIA-ANTOINETTA

had no resource but in her innocence, in the confidence of Louis XVI. which was never for a moment diminished, and in the consolations of friendship which she received in abundance, particularly from the Princess de Lamballe, and the Dutchess de Polignac. It was on this occasion that she used to the former those remarkable expressions, on the subject of the odious libels in which she was treated without the slightest decency: " It seems as if malice had coolly cal-
" culated all the means of ruffling my soul; but
" I will triumph over the wicked by trebbling
" the good I have endeavoured to do: it is easier
" for certain people to grieve me than to rouse
" me to take revenge."

Another reproach which the enemies of MARIA-ANTOINETTA never ceased pressing upon her to the very grave, was the exclusive attachment she was supposed to have for her native country. It was said, that though she was constantly speaking of her love for the French nation, she was still at the bottom of her heart an Austrian; and always ready to sacrifice the interests of her husband to those of her brother, the Emperor Joseph II: it was held a crime in her to retain an attachment to those faithful Hungarians who had so nobly concurred in supporting the glory and

power of her august mother; it was an offence to see in her the tie which supported between France and Austria that strict alliance, which had subsisted for near forty years, and promised to be perpetual, had not the Revolution come on, annulling all treaties, and confounding all the political elements of the world. The alliance established by the administration of the Duke de Choiseul, between Austria and France, secured the tranquillity of Europe for ages; but the French character seems inimical to repose, a state that does not agree with the impetuosity of an ardent nation, which cannot suffer an equal, and which thinks itself the last nation of Europe if it be not the first. A powerful cabal at Court opposed all union with the Emperor, and maintained that the only natural alliance of France in the German Empire was that of Prussia. An unfortunate indemnity, amounting to two millions of livres (82000l. sterling) which France had engaged to pay to Joseph II. in the name and in the place of the United Provinces, in order to put an end to the troubles existing in the Low Countries and in Holland, and of which the periods of payment happened just at the beginning of the Revolution, furnished a pretence for a display of all the malignity of the cabal. In the pamphlets of the times, the sum agreed to be

paid to the Emperor was magnified, in some ten-fold, in others a hundred; and when the *Caisse d'Escompte*, in consequence of its mismanagement, was obliged to stop the payment of their bills in cash, when the Government was forced to convoke the Notables, to make known to them that there was a *deficit* in the finances, it was every where reported that it was owing to the immense sums of money that MARIA-ANTOINETTA had sent to the Emperor, and continued to send to Vienna, which robbed France of its specie, and would cause a bankruptcy. This ferment was farther encreased by an imprudent step. The time being arrived for one of these payments, whether through a perfidious design of the Minister at that period, or through the ignorance of those under him, the remittance was not made in bills of exchange, but in specie. The waggon with the cash thus sent, amounting to a hundred thousand crowns, and addressed to the Emperor's banker at Brussels, set out precisely at one of those moments of commotion, when every thing going in or out of the barriers of Paris was strictly searched. The departure of so large a sum of money excited suspicions; and though the most satisfactory explanation was given, the circumstance armed the ill-disposed with a weapon of which they long made use.

The Queen became exposed to the most shocking calumnies; and, as if it were not enough for her detractors to pierce their victim, they would have the envenomed dart with which they struck her remain fixed in her. Her soul became a prey to grief, her features altered, and I saw her lose insensibly her gaiety and usual sprightliness. I frequently saw on her face, at once so majestic and so sweet, the marks of the tears she had been shedding. Some persons attached to the Court, after being absent for some months, scarcely knew her again. One day, in the Bois de Boulogne, she met the old Mareschal de Biron, Colonel of the regiment of French Guards, who was recovering from a long illness, and who was using himself to riding his horse, that he might be reviewed by the King some days after at the head of his regiment. The Queen accosted him, and said, that she should be very glad to see him at the review. The old warrior, not suspecting that he was speaking to his Sovereign, replied with the gallantry with which he treated all women, and promised her a good place. To keep his word, he asked her name, in order to make a memorandum of it, that he might speak to the officer who should have the charge of the ground on the day of the review. What was the surprise of the venerable Mareschal, when

he heard from the mouth of the lady whom he was assuring of his attentions, that he spoke to MARIA-ANTOINETTA herself!

And who was this Sovereign, whom some Frenchmen thus took a pleasure in reviling, and whose woe-worn countenance the oldest courtiers no longer knew? She on whom, a few years before, the celebrated genius at the head of the French literature wrote the following lines, so replete with grace, so strikingly just:

Le Ciel mit dans ses traits cet éclat qu'on admire;
France, il la couronna pour ta félicité;
Un sceptre est inutile avec tant de beauté;
Mais à tant de vertus il falloit un empire *—

LA HARPE.

She whose portrait, in the paintings where she is represented surrounded by her children, constantly drew crouds to the exhibition of pictures where they firſt appeared, and to the apartments at Versailles where they were, and are ſtill, the chief ornament. Delightful pictures, which one can never tire in contemplating, before which

* Heaven to her features gave that lustre which the world admire; France, it bestowed a crown upon her for thy happiness; a sceptre indeed is useless to so much beauty; but so many virtues required an empire.

the subject attached to his former maſters, and their old and faithful servants of Versailles and Paris still come to shed tears, in remembrance of the virtues and of the kindness which the features of MARIA-ANTOINETTA bring to their mind, and before which strangers, coming from the extremities of Europe to visit the wrecks of France, divide their admiration between the beauty of the archetype, and the talent of the celebrated artiſt*, who has been thus able to give her a second life.

She who, in the month of June 1788, by the majesty of her deportment, and the lustre of her countenance, struck with astonishment those unfortunate Ambassadors of Tippoo Saib, who came from the extremities of the East to the Court of the great King, and who, in the very entertainments and ceremonials they themselves occasioned, found the cause of the death to which they were doomed by the tyrant who had sent them, mortified at the accounts they gave him of the magnificence and state of Paris and Versailles, of the prosperity, extent, and power of France. Alas! I recollect with sorrow being

* Madame Le Brun, who is in England while this is sent to the press.

present at that grand audience, in which taste and splendour combined all their powers to give those Asiatics a high idea of the French Monarchy. I still in imagination see those Ambassadors arriving, walking a great way through a thousand beauties, seated on gradual benches, to the whole extent of the immense apartments of Versailles; I see them entering the Hercules Saloon, and there, at the foot of the throne of Louis XVI. standing, unable for a quarter of an hour to speak, struck with astonishment and admiration at sight of the grandeur and riches displayed by the Court. But it was less the marbles, the pictures, the carpets, that ornamented this beautiful hall; it was less the gold, silver, embroidery, and diamonds sparkling in every part, that enchanted and dazzled those good Orientals, than the countenance of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, on whom all eyes were fixed. In vain should I attempt to paint the lustre which surrounded her on that occasion; no words, but those of the beautiful line of Racine, can properly express it:

Le monde en la voyant, eût reconnu sa Reine*.

Who, I repeat, was this Sovereign, whose life, public and private, has been so violently at-

* To see her the world would have acknowledged its Queen.

tacked by abuse and calumny? It was that Princess to whom the noble and ardent Gustavus III. in the transports of admiration she inspired him with, swore that she was his lady, and that he would be her knight against all traitors and rebels who should dare to open their mouth against her; an engagement he was preparing to perform, when the dagger of an assassin cut short his life, and rendered the projects he had conceived abortive. It was the bosom friend of that Princess so virtuous, mild, and pure, who seemed to be an angel, stationed by Heaven amidst the Royal Family to console them in the hours of affliction; the bosom friend of Madame Elizabeth, in whose face were united the Queen's beauty with the benignant features of her august brother. That Princess, of unblemished morals and exemplary piety, that celestial mind, was attached with the tenderest affection to MARIA-ANTOINETTA: will it ever in future be believed, that this adorable woman could have vowed and preserved the unalterable attachment she manifested for the Queen, had there been the slightest foundation for the least of the charges that have been advanced or insinuated by her enemies against her conduct? The constant friendship of Madame Elizabeth would be an answer to every calumny, a refutation of every

libel, were it necessary to answer or refute them.

I shall here no doubt be expected to unveil the nature of that cabal, that faction, which thus persecuted the unfortunate MARIA-ANTOINETTA. I am sensible how very painful my task becomes, and I can with truth declare, that before I took up the pen I frequently wished most fervently, that I were allowed to throw a veil over the authors and abettors of that malice which precipitated my benefactress into the abyss of misfortunes where she was lost. Being obliged, in order to find the source of it, to look among a family, the heads of which received and loaded me with favours, it is with real grief, I find myself under the necessity of placing the Duke of Orléans, the first Prince of the Blood, at the head of that faction. So many others have named him before me; his actions and his death are so notorious, that not to speak of them, or to attempt to palliate his faults, when speaking of the events in which he took so great a part, would be in some sort to own one's self his accomplice. I must briefly state what occasioned the unceasing hatred the Duke of Orléans bore to the consort of his King.

Louis Philip of Orléans received from nature the happiest disposition, and an uncommon degree of personal beauty. His early years were attended with extraordinary brilliancy. Unfortunately, he soon gave himself up to dissipation, and to the company of a large circle of men without morals or reputation, who persuaded him that the grand principle of life ought to be a dereliction of all principle, and a contempt for public opinion. Owner of a palace where gallantry and sensuality seemed, from the licentious times of the Regency, to have fixed their abode, he plunged, soon after his entrance into life, into debauchery and lewdness. Though married to the virtuous, the incomparable daughter of the Duke de Penthièvre, he stole from her chaste endearments, to riot in orgies of which a description would scarcely now be credited, were there not so many witnesses in every class of society who can vouch it. To remove the veil of those shameful mysteries would be a task suited only to the pen of an Aretin: for me, it shall suffice to say, that in a short time the Duke of Orléans' face became completely altered, and broke out with incurable blotches that proved to every body his excesses of every kind. He soon seduced and led into the same excesses his brother-in-law, a young Prince, who was born to have one day

inherited the name, the virtues, and the immense fortune of the Duke de Penthièvre. The Prince de Lamballe had but just entered into a contract of marriage with a Princess of the House of Savoy, which was announced under the happiest auspices, when a dreadful disease took him off in the flower of youth, from the most charming wife and the best of fathers. As, by his premature death, the Duke of Orléans became the immediate heir of a large fortune, it was not easy to convince the public that he had not at least hastened it by his advice and example; for, to have caused it knowingly and through avarice, would have been a crime so atrocious, so inconsistent with the age of the Duke of Orléans at that time, that it would be something even more than injustice to believe what was suggested at that period, and for which his subsequent conduct has unfortunately given too much ground. Be that as it may, the immorality of which he made a parade, prevented MARIA-ANTOINETTA from admitting him to those private parties which she gave at Versailles and Trianon; parties from which, as I have already said, the gaiety and sprightliness that gave life to them never intrenched on the forms of decency and propriety. It was at first on these assemblies of the most amiable persons of the Court, that the partizans and associates in

debauchery of the Duke of Orléans darted their envenomed sarcasms; and yet the very exclusion of the Duke of Orléans and his friends, proved precisely the contrary of what those indirect insinuations were intended to impress upon the public. To the desire of vengeance excited at the *Palais-Royal* by this marked disapprobation of the Queen's, was farther added, the resentment that arose from the doubts which had been expressed at Court of the courage that the friends of the Duke of Orléans pretended he had displayed in the engagement off Ushant; doubts which were soon turned to certainty, in the eyes of the public, by the nomination of the Duke of Orléans to the post of Colonel-General of the Hussars; a nomination which compelled him to give up entirely the sea-service, and deprived him of all hope of obtaining the place of Grand Admiral of France, which he had in view. Those sarcasms were repeated, spread about, and armed with stings by the idle and subordinate partizans who swarmed in the piazzaes of the *Palais-Royal*, and who shared the principles, the conduct, frequently the favours, and even the friendly familiarity of its owner.

Several other circumstances contributed to keep up this mutual aversion. The Duke of

Orléans having planned a marriage between one of his sons and the daughter of Louis XVI, MARIA-ANTOINETTA, who already at that time saw in the Duke d'Angoulême the future husband of her beloved daughter, of the Princess who had first made her feel the happiness of being a mother, opposed, in the firmest and most decided manner, a marriage repugnant to her in every point of view. This rejection inflamed still more, passions which it was so easy to raise.

The Duke of Orléans had been frequently in England, and he not only brought into France at his return the manners, customs, games, nay the very failings he found in that nation; he not only in his gardens, domestic establishment, horses, carriages, jockeys, races, and bets, put himself at the head of those, who were then spreading in France what was called the Anglomania; he likewise imported all the erroneous notions of politics which were circulated in that country. Foremost among these may be placed the false maxim of its being necessary in a mixed Monarchy, that the heir to the Throne should be at the head of the opposition. Adopting this principle, most certainly inapplicable to the French Government, the Duke of Orléans, incensed beyond bearing by

the manner in which he was treated at Court, and perhaps desirous, as we have already said, to imitate the Prince of Conti, thought himself obliged to encourage whatever had the slightest appearance of opposition to the King's Government. When the Court of the Peers were assembled, when the King exercised his Royal authority, every time the Notables were convoked, the Duke of Orléans always took a part in opposition to the beneficent views of the Court, and to the plans which might have maintained the tranquillity of the State. He leagued with the turbulent Magistrates, collected around him all those men of ruined fortunes and shuffling character who discovered any talents, filled the clubs and coffee-houses in his Palace with declaimers; he gave, contrary to his custom and natural disposition, extraordinary assistance to the people, and distributed alms in abundance among the poor, at the period when the States-General were about to be opened; he endured two successive banishments, with the firmness of a man desirous of appearing as a victim; he chose for his Chancellor a man overwhelmed with debt and lost to virtue, and for his confidential Secretary an officer of artillery, whose only title to his confidence was having written a scandalous novel. This was the man whom

he employed, in conjunction with a gloomy leveller, to draw up for his Bailiwicks instructions, in which were found all the seeds of a Republic. When a tutor was wanted for his children, he chose through caprice for that office, which should have been filled only by a man, a woman, whose reputation was more than equivocal, and for whom the Dutchess of Orléans felt a proper disgust; that Countess of Genlis, whose unavoidable and inexhaustible writings have spread, and continue to spread, like a torrent over Europe *. He invited and lodged in his own Palace that Chamfort, who had been Secretary to the Prince de Condé, and who, when he quitted the noble abode of loyalty for that of rebellion, recommended and fixed in his place that wretched regicide who afterwards dared to read the sentence of death to Louis XVI†. In fine, when

* It is incumbent upon me to observe by the way, that if Mad^e. de Genlis contributed to the first impressions received by the Princes of the House of Orléans at the beginning of the Revolution, and to the serious errors committed by two of them at that time, yet from the education she gave them, from the taste she early inspired them with for study, for application to all the exercises of the mind and body, and for reflexion on the vicissitudes of fortune, they are become accomplished Princes, excellent men, who have already repaired the errors of their youth, and will one day cast a veil over the crimes of their father.

† Grouvelle.

the meeting of the States-General took place, far from ranging himself, with the other Princes of the Blood, around the Throne, in order to protect it with all his influence and popularity, he was seen seeking a place among the factious, whose nomination had been particularly favoured by the Necker family, and coalescing with the Count de Mirabeau, the Duke d'Aiguillon, Camille Desmoulins, Siéyès, the Duke de Biron, la Touche, Marat, Péthion, the Count de la Mark, the Lameths, the husband of the Vicountess de Beauharnois, the Marquis de St. Huruge, and many other promoters of rebellion of every class. Attached at that time to a woman who disgraced one of the most celebrated names in science, he established a meeting at Viroflay, near Versailles, which I may call the head-quarters of insurrection. Whenever there was a mob of the people, on the Pont-Neuf, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, or in the square of the Hotel-de-Ville, one was sure to see among them either the Duke of Orléans, his livery, his carriages, or somebody belonging to his house.

Thus inauspiciously commenced the great scene of the French Revolution. Rebellion was organized in a manner from that very period. The Palais-Royal and the markets of Paris on the one part; and on the other all France, ac-

knowledging their King. Loyalty, right, the love of the people, honour, religion, were on one side: on the other sedition, infidelity, atheism, all the vices together giving a hand to all the crimes; and for the counterpoise or regulator of this balance, an alien Minister, an exasperated, ambitious, and presumptuous man, who had no plan formed, except it were that of remaining at the head of the Administration in spite of the King, by flattering the popular passions and prejudices.

The States-General opened with great pomp on the 5th of May 1789. I was witness likewise to that fatal ceremony. I attended in the procession that took place before divine service; I heard the affecting sermon preached by the Bishop of Nancy; I was present in the evening at the famous sitting with which that Assembly opened. The King delivered, in that pathetic accent which he had received from nature, a speech that breathed all the goodness of his paternal heart, and his love for his subjects. I observed with admiration, that MARIA-ANTOINETTA, who was very simply dressed, stood respectfully all the time that the King was calling on the Members of the States-General to labour with him for the public good. I heard the

Keeper of the Seals, Mr. de Barentin, afterwards make a sensible and appropriate speech on the occasion for which the Representatives of the nation were assembled; and lastly, I was condemned to listen for two hours to the unmeaning bombast of the Minister of the Finances, which being delivered in a dry manner, with the accent of a pedagogue, and containing nothing that touched the sensibility of the open Royalist, or that offered hopes to the secret Republican, pleased nobody.

That day was one of the most painful of my life. An unaccountable feeling forewarned me of the storms that were gathering. The uneasiness which I knew was preying on MARIA-ANTOINETTA, had communicated itself to my bosom. I knew that business the most intricate in politics and legislation was preparing to be brought forward. I every where heard of *social contract*, rights of man, constitution, liberty, equality, and sovereignty of the people. I had no desire to be acquainted with any other rights than those of my adoptive Sovereigns to my allegiance, and from that moment I determined never to leave them again for a single instant, and to consecrate to them my sword, my blood, and my life.

NOTES

AND

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

TO

CHAPTER I.

ANXIOUS to give a complete history of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, I shall here collect, by way of supplement, several anecdotes which I have met with in various works, published before and since her death. I have selected such as I was myself acquainted with, or as have been confirmed to me by undoubted authority. May this collection of affecting and characteristic touches of the most adorable Queen that ever graced a throne, communicate to every feeling mind the emotion they create in my breast every time I think of them! Never can I forget them for a single instant.

Page 1, line 5, after—*of Hungary and Bohemia.*

This Princess had the double advantage of descending from one of the most illustrious families in Europe, and being born of a mother whose name still shines with undiminished lustre, and whose reign constitutes a striking epocha of glory in the annals of that immortal House. It was that great character, whom the brave Hungarians gloried in calling THEIR KING, and who at the age of fourteen sat in her father's Council, that educated the Archduchess, for whom fortune had reserved a fate and calamities too well adapted to try a courage formed by lessons so sublime, and such grand examples.

Page 4, line 15, after—*the young Archduchess.*

Maria-Theresa divided her time between the duties of a Sovereign and those of a mother. She superintended the education of the Archduchesses with the most interesting attention, and was present at their lessons. The best masters, the ablest tutors were employed to direct the first efforts of the understanding of MARIA-ANTOINETTA, to adorn her memory, enlighten her reason, and cultivate her intellect. Such, among the latter, was the Abbé de Vermont, who united the rarest qualities of the mind with that acuteness and modesty which form men to succeed at Courts. He was sent by the Duke de Choiseul, to whom the Empress had applied for a man capable of giving a knowledge of France to her who was to reign over it. Happy in the confidence of his illustrious pupil, he remained devoted to her through his life; and by constantly refusing the too munificent testimonies of her regard, he at length compelled those to esteem who were but too inclined to envy him.

His lessons no doubt encreased that predilection for France which MARIA-ANTOINETTA had so early manifested. Her august mother one day putting questions to her on the character of the different nations of Europe, asked her which she should prefer to reign over, if it were at her option? "Over the French," replied she without hesitation; "it was over them that "Henry IV. and Louis XIV. reigned, of whom one gives the "idea of *goodness*, and the other of *greatness*." Maria-Theresa took great pleasure in repeating this reply, with which she was so delighted, that she requested the French Ambassador to make it known to his master.

MARIA-ANTOINETTA made a very rapid progress in all her studies; she was acquainted with Latin, and spoke and wrote German, French and Italian elegantly. She was endowed with the happiest taste for the fine arts, and particularly for that which has the greatest charm for feeling minds. Her talents for music have often been the delight of the select parties she assembled at Bellevue, Trianon, and Versailles, where the liveliest enthusiasm was excited by her accomplishments no less than by her beauty and rank.

Maria-Theresa wished, above all, that her beloved daughter should inherit the courage and fortitude of which she had herself given such striking proofs; and, impelled by the anxious forebodings of maternal love, she often gave her this prophetic exhortation: "My daughter, in adversity think of me." She also taught her to cherish the virtues of those faithful subjects who by their noble devotion had supported her tottering throne.

MARIA-ANTOINETTA one day proved to them that, if a loyal attachment and a love of their Sovereigns were transmitted among them from age to age, gratitude and goodness were likewise perpetuated in the Imperial family. The Empress being indisposed, some Hungarian officers were waiting in her anti-chamber till they could have an opportunity to present a

petition. The Archduchess seeing them, went into her mother's room, and said to her: "Mamma, some of your friends, "anxious about your health, wish to see you."—"And who "are those friends?"—"Hungarians."—"Charming! my "daughter." Their petition was immediately granted.

A thousand incidents of her infancy speak no less the praise of MARIA-ANTOINETTA's heart, the compassionate feelings of which extended to every class of the unfortunate. During a severe winter, in which the public works were nearly suspended, the people at Vienna suffered much. Maria-Theresa, while she provided for the most urgent wants of her capital, did not lose sight of her provinces. At one of the Empress's parties, the poor was the subject of the tenderest concern; beneficence was, as it were, naturalized at Court, by the example of Maria-Theresa. A sad account was given of the wretchedness of some persons living in the suburbs: MARIA-ANTOINETTA with tears in her eyes left the room, and in an instant returned with a little box, which she presented to her mother with these words: "Here are fifty-five Ducats, they "are all I have, let them be divided among those poor people." Maria-Theresa accepted the gift, and adding her own alms to it, took a delight in letting them pass by the hands of the compassionate Princess.

Page 6, line 7, after—*afflicting scene took place.*

Maria-Theresa felt the pangs of the best of mothers at the moment of a separation which she foresaw was to be for life. The whole Court was assembled; the Archdukes and the chief of the Nobility stood round the Empress. MARIA-ANTOINETTA was in tears, and all present sympathized in the painful feelings of the mother and daughter. The Empress, pressing her child to her heart, addressed her in these words, which displayed at

once her tenderness and her great mind: "Adieu, my dear "daughter; we shall soon be far from each other. Be just, hu- "mane, sensible of the duties of your rank, and I shall be "proud of the pangs which I have now long to suffer. You "are gifted with all the means of pleasing; reflect how you "may use them for the happiness of your husband; but do so "much good among the French that they may think I have "sent them an Angel." Her agitation stifled her voice, and again she pressed her daughter to her bosom. Every body was in tears. The Dauphiness fainted, and as soon as she recovered her senses was hurried to the carriage that was waiting for her.

Page 7, line 11, after—*captivated all hearts.*

The persons who were in the suite of the Dauphiness endeavoured to make the way agreeable, and to multiply her recreations. One of the ladies who accompanied her said jokingly; "Do you long very much to see the Dauphin?" To this indiscreet question, addressed to a young inexperienced female, the Dauphiness gave an answer which showed the strength of her understanding. In a tone full of dignity, she said: "Madam, I shall be at Versailles in the course of five "days; on the sixth I shall more easily be able to answer you." Then instantly assuming the greatest loveliness, she tried to make the lady forget the formality of her reply.

Having passed the extensive provinces under her mother's dominion, and entered the territory of France, on being told of it, fresh tears started from her eyes: all she said, however, was, "I shall never see her more." It was but an exclamation of filial piety.

On her arrival at Strasburg, the Chapter, the body of the Nobility, and the members of the Municipal Magistracy were presented to her by the Commandant of the Province. She

replied with dignity and affability to the different speeches ceremony required she should hear. Tired however of these reiterated compliments, she said to one of the ladies of her suite: "I hope that all these praises will not for ever follow "me. As I have yet done nothing to deserve them, I shall "set about making myself worthy of them." Long after she passed through Strasburg, the inhabitants continued to speak with rapture of the beauty, wit, and modesty of the Dauphin's bride.

On the road from Strasburg all the country people left their work, and flew to pay homage to a Princess who was married to that Dauphin whose virtues rendered him so dear to France. The roads were strewed with flowers, and the girls had dressed themselves in their best clothes to present their nosegays to MARIA-ANTOINETTA, who smiled at the sprightliness of some, condescended to answer the compliments of others, and was affable to all. At twenty leagues from Strasburg, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages had assembled. On every side were heard the shouts of *Vive la Dauphine! Vive le Dauphin!* The way was stopped by the crowd of people: the window-blinds of the Princess's carriage were drawn up, and all the spectators had time to contemplate her beauty, her enchanting smile, and her sweet countenance. "How beautiful our Dauphiness!" was the observation of the young peasants to one another. A lady in the carriage directing her attention to this expression, so flattering to a young woman; "Madam," said the Princess, "the French look at me with "partial eyes."

At some leagues from Châlons, an old Parish Priest, at the head of his parishioners, approached the carriage. He did not raise his eyes to the Princess, but kept them respectfully downwards. For the short speech he had prepared, he had taken this text from the Song of Solomon; *pulchra es et formosa; fair thou art and beautiful.* Having proceeded a few sentences, just

as he was repeating his text, according to the mode of preachers, he happened to cast his eyes on MARIA-ANTOINETTA: he instantaneously forgot his speech, stammered, and stopped. The Archduchess immediately offered to accept the nosegay he had in his hand. Affected with her goodness the Priest addressed her thus: "Madam, do not be surprized at my want "of recollection: Solomon himself at sight of you, would have "forgotten his fair Egyptian, lost the thread of his speech, "and addressed to you, with much more justice, the words, "*pulchra es et formosa.*"

Wherever the Princess made any stay, she gained the hearts of every body, by her extreme mildness, affability, and beneficence. All who saw her went home enchanted with her, blessing her, and congratulating themselves that she would one day be their Queen.

Some Professors and their pupils, from towns beyond Compiégne, waited upon her, and paid their compliments in latin; and great was the astonishment of those little *Ciceros*, when the Princess answered them in the same language, with inconceivable fluency.

The Court was at Compiégne, and the Duke de Choiseul went to meet her at some leagues distance from that place: a favour to which he was well entitled. The Princess received him as a friend whose counsels might be of use to her, and supply her want of experience.

Louis XV, who had gone to Compiégne on purpose, went out with a great retinue to meet the Princess in the forest. As soon as she saw the King, she alighted from her carriage, and ran and threw herself at his feet. Louis, greatly affected, raised and embraced her affectionately. The beauty of her person, and the frankness of her manners, were admired by the whole Court. Louis XV, naturally very polite, and who could observe the rules of propriety, took upon himself to present the young Princess to her intended husband. The

Dauphin advancing with a lively air, seized one of her hands, and kissed it with rapture. The admiration with which he gazed at her from time to time made her cast down her eyes, while a lovely blush overspread her cheeks.

When she retired at night the ladies who attended her to her chamber told her, that she had charmed every body, but particularly the Dauphin. "I am regarded here with too much "indulgence," replied MARIA-ANTOINETTA; "my heart is "contracting debts which it will never be able to pay, but I "hope I shall at least have credit for my desire to do it."

The day after her arrival at Compiégne, she set out with the whole Court for Versailles. At St. Denis she requested to see *Madame Louise**. This homage paid to virtue and true piety, gained the merited respect and praise of every worthy mind.

The carriages now proceeded towards Versailles, and all the inhabitants of Paris and the neighbouring towns crowded the road between St. Denis and the *Porte-Maillot:* the coaches formed a double row, and the people applauded with intoxication. The horses that drew the Princess were obliged to walk; the people pressed about her carriage to look at her and look again. She was made to observe what rapture her arrival excited. In her reply, she insinuated that she had imagined all these plaudits were intended for the King. "The French," said she, "do not see their King often enough: they cannot treat "me more kindly than by convincing me that they love him "whom I have already habituated myself to consider as my "new father."

The Court supped at the palace of La Muette, where by the King's favour Madame du Barry had the honour of sitting at the same table with the Princess, who, too young to form a judgment of the situation of that favourite at Court, was sen-

* The Aunt of Louis XVI.

sible that it was her own part to respect the will of the King. She did not appear the least embarrassed, was polite, and even when asked her opinion of the Countess du Barry, condescended to answer that she thought her *charming*. The expression was noticed and repeated; it was the eulogium of the beauty of Louis's mistress, but it was also the only one she merited, and the whole Court applauded the justness of the reply.

From La Muette the King went to Versailles, and on the next day, the 16th of May 1770, MARIA-ANTOINETTA OF LORRAINE, being dressed in her bridal clothes, was led in triumph to the Palace Chapel, where at the foot of the altar she received the nuptial benediction, and was united to the young Prince, who was to be the successor of Louis XV.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the sky was covered with clouds; Versailles was overflowed by torrents of rain, violent claps of thunder rent the air, and the crowd of people whom curiosity had collected in the gardens were obliged to retire. The evening was gloomy throughout the town, the fire-works were not played off, and no effect could be produced by the illuminations.

A magnificent supper was served at the Palace, and never had the Court of Versailles been more brilliant. Curiosity, the desire of appearing, the wish of obtaining a look, had drawn together an immense crowd of the Nobility, who appeared in all the splendour that rank and opulence could bestow. The Dauphiness having observed in the number of those presented to her many Noblemen whom she had seen at the Court of Vienna, said to the Princess de Chimai: "I had heard that "nothing was equal to the magnificence of the Court of Ver- "sailles, but never was told that it was the point of union of all "those we are, or should wish to be, acquainted with." It was by amiable remarks, and always well-timed, that MARIA-ANTOINETTA enraptured the hearts of the French.

The favourable and distinguished reception she gave the Duke de Choiseul having been noticed, she pleasantly said to Madame de Noailles: "My mother has talked to us so much "about the *Coachman of Europe**; that I thought myself "bound to treat him as a friend of my family's."

When the Marquis du Châtelet was introduced to her, the Countess of Périgord observed, that he had the honour of being allied to the House of Lorraine. "My brother," said she delicately, "assured me that his family trace the con- "nexion for upwards of 600 years. Still there is more merit "in being a good servant of the King's, than in being my "relation."

Page 24, line 27, after—*she was united.*

Amidst the Court the Dauphin and Dauphiness led an exemplary life, living for each other. When by themselves, they planned the good they would do, and thought of the unfortunate. They often left the Palace together, and rambled through the adjacent country, liberally distributed alms themselves, visited the cottages of the poor, consoled the distressed, and bestowed their bounty with a nobleness, and a generosity worthy their birth and rank.

Inhabitants of the environs of Versailles, Meudon, La Muette, St. Cloud, Trianon, St. Cyr! ye have seen the Dauphin's consort, the object of admiration and of love, steal into the asylums of the poor, and with her own hands assist to comfort the sick. But for her how many families in the lowest state of want would have been reduced to despair! Ye who

* The appellation given to Mr. de Choiseul by Catherine II. of Russia, as she ascribed to him the honour of directing all the Cabinets of Europe.

for many years were witnesses of her beneficence; ye who perhaps are indebted to her generosity for a happy existence, join your homage to ours: speak again of her virtues, of her bounty; justice and gratitude call upon you.

The Dauphin's character was a mixture of mildness and severity. Of pure morals, regular in his conduct, and free from those great passions which are ever dangerous, he already gave an earnest of what he was in time to be, a good father, a good husband, a good King. He delighted to do whatever the Dauphiness wished, and took pleasure in going to the places where she had made people happy: he liked to hear her good actions spoken of; he enquired into the particulars of them, and blessed Heaven for giving him a wife after his own heart, mild, generous, beneficent.

One day, as she was walking in the neighbourhood of Versailles, she saw an old woman with five beautiful children about her, whom she was caressing in the tenderest manner. She was too old to be their mother, and her poverty rendered her caresses interesting. The Dauphiness went up and spoke to her, and heard in the accents of truth that the children were orphans, that she supplied the place of a mother to them, and that she endeavoured by her labour to provide them with sustenance. "Your example is so excellent," said MARIA-ANTOINETTA, "that I cannot but be eager to follow it, and "I shall take the care of you and your adopted family upon "myself." On her return to Versailles, she related what she had done in her walk to the King and the Dauphin; her humanity was applauded, and her promise realized; the old woman was taken care of, and the children placed out at board, till they could be provided for. MARIA-ANTOINETTA often told the story of her good old woman, and said with admirable grace: "Would to Heaven, all my walks had the same end!—it would be real happiness to go in quest of the unfortunate."

A son of Mad^e. Thibault, first waiting-woman to the Dauphiness, fought a duel in the Park at Compiégne, and killed his antagonist. His mother immediately solicited the influence of the Dauphiness in favour of her son, and by means of that powerful intercession he was saved from the severity of the law. Some person at Court taking the liberty of saying to the Princess that Mad^e. Thibault had not applied for her interposition till she had been denied that of Madame du Barry, the Dauphiness exclaimed: *I would, were I a mother, to save my son, throw myself at the feet of Zamore.* Zamore was a little negro of Mad^e. du Barry's.

The felicity of the people was her chief occupation, and whatever could soften their lot, became the subject of her thoughts. She wished not to be a Queen but to do good, and said, with her august mother Maria-Theresa, that it was the only mode of reigning that could render the weight of the Crown supportable.

There existed among the French an ancient and gallant custom, which the Queens of France had been desirous of maintaining. The French paid to every new Queen ascending the throne a duty known by the name of *the Queen's belt.* This tax had its origin from a religious and domestic institution in the first age of the monarchy. When a young maiden was led to the altar of hymen, a belt was provided by the husband's family, which the Priest blessed, and the bridegroom tied round the waist of the bride. This ornament was more or less rich, according to the circumstances of the family. When the children of Clovis founded in Gaul a tripple monarchy, the people to flatter their new masters, and to acknowledge publicly that they were the children of the Monarch who was to be their father, offered the blessed belt to their Queens. The custom was kept up till the accession of Louis XVI, when MARIA-ANTOINETTA, hearing that this duty bore heavily on the more

indigent classes, and that the privileged orders had found means to exempt themselves from it, besought the King to forbid the collecting of it. Louis XVI. was charmed with this generous action, and the whole nation applauded the disinterestedness and beneficence of the young Queen. Poetry was called in to preserve the remembrance of the sacrifice, and the Count de Coutourelle, taking upon himself to be the organ of a grateful people, addressed the following stanza to the Queen:

Vous renoncez, charmante Souveraine,
Au plus beau de vos revenus;
Mais que vous serviroit la ceinture de Reine?
Vous avez celle de Vénus.

Renounce, fair Queen, your noblest due!
Renounce the bless'd, the regal zone!
Yet, what imports this belt to you,
Since that of Venus is your own?

Page 27, line 14, after—*the new reign.*

MARIA-ANTOINETTA assisted at Rheims at the ceremony of the coronation. Her modest demeanour, and her respect to all the parts of the church service, proved to the whole Court the sincerity of her religious sentiments. She appeared to glory in the piety of Louis, in his zeal and attachment to the religion of his ancestors. She did not content herself with a few acts of devotion, but shewed herself tender, generous, and compassionate. When, according to custom, some sick people approached the Monarch, who blessed them, MARIA-ANTOINETTA, regardless of contagion, and the foulness of their clothes, suffered herself to be surrounded, consoled the unfortunate persons, and distributed alms to them. As the

multitude came up, she said to those near the carriage: "You "have great pleasure in seeing us, and we assure you that we "have likewise a great deal in seeing your eagerness." To those who were endeavouring to keep off the crowd, she said, "Softly, gentlemen, let these good people come near, they "will do us no harm." She one day saw close to her a poor workman and a woman staring at the King, and crying out, *Vive notre bon Roi! Long live our good King!* She beckoned to them, took hold of their hands, and presented them to Louis, saying to them, "this is your King." MARIA-ANTOINETTA was proud of the praises bestowed on the virtues of her husband, and of the love of the French towards him.

Page 32, line 30, after—*all her fav'rites fame declare.*

The French seemed enchanted with the Dauphiness. Every Muse attempted to celebrate her; all the Theatres sung her praises. The Academies and Lyceums paid homage to her. Her beauty, her virtues, and her wit were by turns the subject of a poem or a song. At the end of an entertainment, where she had been *incognito*, Dorat presented her the following verses:

Quoi! sous un nuage envieux,
Croyez-vous, auguste *Dauphine*,
Pouvoir vous cacher en ces lieux?
Lorsque Vénus descend des cieux,
On sent l'influence divine
De son aspect majestueux;
Et lorsque vous trompez les yeux,
Le cœur des Français vous devine.

"What! fair Princess, do you think that you can be con-"cealed in this place by an envious cloud? When Venus leaves

" the skies, the divine influence of her countenance is felt
" every where; and you, though you shun their eyes, are felt
" to be present in the hearts of the French."

The sculptor, Le Moine, having made a bust of the Dauphiness, to prove himself a poet also, addressed the following verses to her:

Combien ce buste m'a couté!
Je croyais avoir imité
De la nymphe la plus jolie,
Sourire fin, douce gaité;
Et d'une Princesse accomplie,
Graces, noblesse, majesté.
Fier de mon art, et de votre beauté,
Je crus dix fois ma besogne finie;
Je revenais, vous étiez embellie,
Et mon art étoit dérouté.
Vous avouerai-je mes alarmes,
Et ma honte et mon désespoir?
Une semaine, un jour ajoutait à vos charmes,
Et toujours mon talent me paroissoit décheoir.
En vous quittant, je répandois des larmes,
Et je tremblois de vous revoir.
Du ciseau l'heureuse imposture
S'efforceroit en vain de suivre la nature:
Son pouvoir est illimité;
Mais il faut bien que l'art s'arrête,
Je crois avoir fini la plus charmante tête,
Et je livre ce marbre à la postérité.
Nos neveux le croiront flatté,
Mais, vous voyant encore plus belle,
L'âge présent rira de ma caducité,
Et dira: Le Moine est resté
Trop au-dessous de son modèle.

" What has this bust cost me! I thought I had copied from " the most beautiful nymph, an arch smile, and a lovely air, " and from an accomplished Princess, graces, dignity, and ma- " jesty. Proud of my art and of your beauty, I thought my " work finished: I thought so ten times, but when I returned " to compare, your charms were encreased, and my art de- " feated. Shall I confess to you my alarm, my shame, and " my despair? To you every week, every day, gave new " beauties, while my talents seemed daily to fail me. I shed " tears on leaving you, and trembled at the thought of seeing " you again. In vain would the happy genius of the chisel " labour to equal nature, whose power is unconfined, while " that of art must stop. I think I have finished the most " charming head, and I consign this marble to posterity. Af- " ter-ages will imagine it flattered, but judges of the present " day, seeing how much handsomer you are, will laugh at " my failure, and say; Le Moine has fallen far below his " original."

Page 53, line 26, after—*Duchess of Angoulême.*

This illustrious Princess was born on the 19th of December 1778, and was baptized the same day by the Cardinal de Rohan. The King of Spain was her god-father, and the Empress-Queen her god-mother. She was called Maria-Theresa-Charlotte; and, according to custom, her title was MADAME, THE KING'S DAUGHTER. All classes of people testified their joy. The High Clergy ordered public prayers; towns made feasts; and the delight of the people was shown by illuminations and dances. Poetry likewise, which seizes on all events, celebrated her birth. A copy of verses of great length was particularly distinguished: the author was a professor of one of the colleges

of Paris, named *Nocl*, who afterwards . . . . .! The three last lines, which related to the Queen, deserve to be quoted:

Multiplier son image,
C'est donner un nouveau gage,
De l'amour qu'elle a pour nous.

" To multiply her image, is to give a new pledge of her " love for us."

Among the military corps the Queen's regiments, infantry and cavalry, distinguished themselves: their zeal, and the testimonies of their joy and love, were sung by a poet, and the following couplets recur pleasantly to mind:

Courage, Messieurs de la Reine,
Vous vous signalez aujourd'hui,
Pour notre auguste Souveraine,
Du ciel vous implorez l'appui:
Un Colonel semblable
Vaut bien que l'on se mette en frais,
Puisqu'à nos yeux tout la rend adorable
Son rang, son sexe et ses attraits.

Voyant ces braves militaires
Demander tous que l'Eternel,
Sensible à leurs justes prières,
Fasse accoucher leur colonel:
La ville toute entière
S'y joint avec empressement;
Lorsqu'il s'agit d'une Reine si chère,
Nous sommes tous du Régiment.

" Go on, Gentlemen of the Queen's Regiment! You are now " distinguishing yourselves: you are imploring the assistance of " Heaven for our august Sovereign; you may well exert your- " selves for such a Colonel, rendered adorable in our eyes, by " her rank, her sex, and her charms."

" Seeing these brave soldiers all beseeching the Eternal that, " propitious to their just prayers, he would grant a safe deli- " very to their Colonel, the whole town joins eagerly in the " prayer: when the question respects a Queen so beloved, we " are all of her regiment."

The Queen had been frequently told that she would have a son, as it was thought it would please her. Among those who had chosen to prophesy so agreeable an event, there was a poetess whose delicate pen was often guided by wit and the graces. This was Madame Beauharnois, to whom the Queen afterwards pleasantly complained of the falseness of her prediction, and in consequence received the following lines from her the next day:

Oui, pour Fée étourdie à vos traits je me livre,
Mais si ma prophétie a manqué son effet,
Il faut vous l'avouer, c'est qu'en ouvrant mon livre,
J'avois pris le premier pour le second feuillet.

" Yes, a poor giddy fairy!—Your jests will I brook;
" And must a false prophet be reckon'd:
" But with you take this, that on opening my book,
" I took the first leaf for the second."

Nothing can be more ingenious than this stanza: it brings to mind Metastasio's lines, and the anecdote that gave rise to them. When Maria-Theresa was pregnant, she one day put this question to one of her courtiers: shall I have a son or a daughter? A Prince, replied he. Well! replied the Empress,

I bet you two ducats that it will be a girl. The Nobleman could not refuse the wager. When the Empress was brought to bed, the courtier finding from the birth of a Princess, that he had lost his wager, was contriving in his mind how he should manage to pay it, when the celebrated Abbé *Metastasio* coming in, and finding him buried in thought, asked what he was thinking of? Conceive my embarrassment, said the courtier—I laid a wager of two ducats with the Empress that she would have a Prince, and she has given us a Princess. Well, replied *Metastasio*, you have lost, and must pay. Pay! said the other, how can I dare to give the Empress two ducats? Oh! if that be all, replied the ingenious Abbé, you shall soon be out of your embarrassment. He then took a pencil out of his pocket, and wrote these lines:

Ho perduto: l'augusta figlia
A pagar m'ha condannato:
Ma s'é vero ch'a voi simiglia,
Tutto 'l mondo ha guadagnato.

"I've lost my bet: your noble pet
"My cash to pay restrains:
"But if 'tis true she is like you,
"Then every body gains."

"Here," continued the Abbé, "fold up your ducats in this "paper, and you may boldly present them to the Empress." The advice was taken, and the Empress smiled at the ingenious mode of paying the bet.

The reader will learn with pleasure that the *daughter* in question was MARIA-ANTOINETTA, whose history he is perusing.

The Queen, it may be naturally imagined, ardently wished that the child to which she was about to give life should be a

Prince, yet her Majesty felt not the least disappointment when she heard that it was a daughter. But the birth of this Princess nearly cost her august mother her life. A long and painful labour reduced her to the brink of the grave. The Abbé de Vermont, her Majesty's reader, had a brother who was a very skilful accoucheur, much esteemed by the Colleges of Medicine and Surgery of Paris. The Abbé presented him to the Queen, who accepted his services; and he justified the choice by his zeal and perseverance. In the dangerous situation in which the Queen was, he proposed to bleed her in the foot without putting it into water. This proposal frightened the physicians and surgeons present; but de Vermont persisted in his opinion. He was then told that France would hold him responsible for the Queen's death: he braved the threat, bled her, and restored her to life.

Page 61, line 8, after—*with their felicitations.*

The people set no bounds to their transports of joy; and they were frank in testifying their feelings. The speech of the Poissardes of Paris is preserved, in which, at an audience granted them, they said to the King:

" Sire, Heaven owed a son to a King who considers his " people as his family—our prayers which have been long put " up for it, are at length granted. Now we are sure that our " children will be as happy as we, for this child must be like " you. You will teach him, Sire, to be good and just as you " are, and we undertake to teach ours how people ought to " respect their King."

Being introduced to the Queen's apartment, they expressed themselves thus:

" We have so long loved you, Madame, without daring to " tell you so, that we stand in need of all our respect to re-

"strain us from abusing the permission of expressing it to
"you."

According to custom, they paid their compliments to the Dauphin also: "You cannot yet," said they, "understand the "prayers we make round your cradle, but they will one day or "other be explained to you; the sum of them is, to see in you "the image of those from whom you have received your life."

It would be too long to repeat here all the speeches of congratulation addressed to the King and Queen. Nor should we ever finish were we also to repeat all the acts of bounty their liberal hands every where spread. Most of the prisoners for debt were liberated, to which purpose they devoted a sum of 474 thousand livres. Portions were given to poor young girls, in the neighbourhood of Versailles; indigent families were relieved, and the people blessed the august pair whose beneficence encreased the number of the happy.

Page 70, line 6, after—*where are we now?*

Heaven seemed willing that nothing should be wanting to the Queen's happiness. The birth of a third child soon followed that of the first Dauphin's. This was that noble boy, of a heavenly countenance, whose heart and understanding equally early mature, added a thousand affecting traits that have been already collected by history, to the dreadful misfortunes of his family, and who ended his days in such a horrible manner in the dungeons of the Temple! He was named *Duke of Normandy*, a title given to him in return for the flattering manner in which the King had been received by the inhabitants of that province, when he went to Cherbourg, to see the superb works at that port. He every where on his road received marks of affection so hearty, affecting, and delightful to him, that in writing to the Queen he said: "The

" love of my people has gone to the bottom of my heart; " judge if I am not the happiest King in the world."

In the hard winter of 1783-1784, MARIA-ANTOINETTA gave new proofs of her favourite virtue, beneficence. She gave out of her private purse five hundred louis-d'or, to be distributed among the poor. In putting this sum into the hands of the Lieutenant of the Police, she said to him—" make haste to " divide the sum among the unfortunate, I never laid out money " with more pleasure." At this time the people did her great justice. They erected a snow pyramid to her honour, at the end of the street, *Coq St. Honoré*, and traced on it these lines:

Reine, dont la bonté surpasse les appas,
Près du Roi bienfaisant occupe ici ta place:
Si ce monument frêle est de neige et de glace,
Nos cœurs pour Toi ne le sont pas.

" Do you, oh Queen, whose goodness exceeds your charms, " take here your place by the beneficent Monarch: though this " frail monument is snow and ice, our hearts are not so towards " you."

The Queen's solicitude for the unfortunate extended generally, and her beneficence was by no means confined to Paris and Versailles. A poor widow with two infants, in a village, was struggling with all the horrors of want, when she unexpectedly received a sum which raised her out of all her distresses. It was not difficult for her to guess the hand whence the succour proceeded. The poor woman attempted to return her thanks in verse.

Entre quatre vieux murs, sous la neige enterrée,
Depuis un mois, hélas! sans feu, sans eau, sans pain,
Par la faim, par la soif, sans cesse déchirée;
A la nature, au ciel je demandois en vain

D'abréger de mes jours la trop longue durée.
Par le froid, dans mon sein, mon lait empoisonné
M'ôtoit le seul plaisir que peut, dans la misère,
Goûter encore une sensible mère.
Un pauvre enfant, mon nouveau-né,
Faisoit retentir ma chaumière
De ses cris déchirans que répétoit son frère.
Lasse enfin de nous voir languir,
La mort, dans un coin de la terre,
Alloit tous trois nous réunir.
C'est dans ce moment même, ô Reine bienfaisante!
Que votre âme compatissante,
Qui sur les malheureux sait si bien s'attendrir,
A fait promptement secourir
L'humanité, sous le chaume souffrante,
Et ces secours nous ont empêché de mourir.
Jugés combien nous devons vous bénir!
Si de mes pieds glacés je recouvre l'usage,
Oui, toute foible que je suis,
J'irai de vos bienfaits vous présenter le prix,
Du pauvre, à vos genoux, vous apporter l'hommage.
De mes enfans, à mes baisers rendus,
Les premiers pas seront pour ce voyage.
De fatigue épuisés, nous serons soutenus
Par l'espoir de tomber aux pieds de notre Reine.
Nous verrons de nos propres yeux
L'infatigable main dont notre Souveraine
Se sert pour essuyer les pleurs des malheureux,
Et ce plaisir alors passera bien la peine.

The sentiment supplied the defects of the poetry. She described her forlorn situation, and the cries of her children, the interposition of the Queen's bounty, by which they were snatched from a wretched death; expressing her gratitude, and her resolution to make the first use of her feet, on her reco-

vering it, to go and obtain a sight of a hand indefatigable in wiping away the tears of the wretched.

Page 90, line 4, after—*with his country's love.*

In this journey the French gave the King unequivocal proofs of their love. Of all the verses produced on the occasion, we shall only cite the following lines, which express a thought so beautiful and true:

Un Roi qu'on aime et qu'on révére
A des sujets en tous climats:
C'est en vain qu'il parcourt la terre,
Il est toujours dans ses Etats.

"A King beloved and revered, has subjects in every region; "let him go to what part of the world he will, he is always in "his own States."

Page 94, line 21—*in three days were elapsed.*

To the pleasures of beneficence, MARIA-ANTOINETTA was formed to add those of friendship. No Princess ever rendered the throne more accessible to the soothing, incomparable delights of intimacy. But to be worthy of it, it was necessary to possess a noble soul, and agreeable talents, and to know how to fulfil all the duties prescribed by friendship. The whole Court beheld with admiration the amiable Princess de Lamballe, Maria-Theresa-Louisa de Savoye-Carignan, the daughter of the King of Sardinia, and widow of the Prince de Lamballe, only son of the Duke de Penthièvre. Nature had endowed her with her noblest gifts, and a brilliant and careful

education had rendered her an accomplished Princess. The Duke de Penthièvre never spoke of the virtues and brilliant qualities of Madame de Lamballe but with enthusiasm. All who knew her did her justice. As remarkable for the purest and mildest manners, as for the happiest disposition, never before the Revolution had any tongue dared to profane her name, and when the blood-thirsty *Commune* of Paris ordered the massacres which cut short so excellent a life, her memory could not be stained. MARIA-ANTOINETTA had placed her in the first rank among those whom she reckoned in the number of her friends. From the instant that these two noble souls could distinguish each other, they were united by friendship for ever. Louis XVI. who was a judge of merit, saw with pleasure the daughter-in-law of the Duke de Penthièvre become the companion and friend of the Queen, to whom he one day said: "I am delighted to see that Madame de Lamballe is always with you; are you very fond of her?"—"Ah, Sire," replied the Queen, "the Princess de Lamballe's friendship is the charm of my life." Some time after this, Louis XVI. appointed her Chief of the Queen's Council, and Superintendant of her Household.

There was at Court another Princess, good, compassionate, replete with graces and charms, generous, worthy to be adored, a good daughter, a good sister, a good friend, in short Madame Elizabeth. What a pure celestial soul! What virtues! She too was the inseparable friend of MARIA-ANTOINETTA.

But the friend dearest to the heart of the Queen, she whom a conformity of character, taste, and sentiment, had long united to her, was Gabriel-Yollande-Martine de Polastron, the wife of Count Jules de Polignac.

MARIA-ANTOINETTA abhorred flatterers. Two ladies of the Court, thinking no doubt to please her, passed some witticisms on the Countess de Brienne. The Queen silenced

them by saying: " Hush, ladies, she is as handsome as she is " prudent: to say any thing against her would be scandal."

A tender friendship was in the Queen's mind a sentiment that constituted the delight of her life, and which she could well describe. The Count de * * * had written an epigram, in which he said that women could not have friends, because they always expected sentiments more lively than those of friendship. The Queen having read the epigram, said to the Countess de * * *: " I beg you will tell your husband, that he " is in his A, B, C, of the knowledge of mankind, in regard to " friendship. If my heart did not give the lie to his pa- " radox, I should consider myself as dead to myself: for I " feel the value of existence only in the happiness of loving, " and in the hope of deserving and obtaining a return."

The trial of Beaumarchais engaged the attention of Paris, and amused the whole town, by the severe keenness of his wit, which spared nothing. The Queen, on the subject of his memorials, said a remarkable thing to the Princess de Tarente: " The wicked wit who produces a laugh is not the most wicked " man; but the wicked wit whose only object is to produce " tears, is the truly wicked. I have read enough of Beau- " marchais, to determine to read him no more." Beaumarchais, being informed of what the Queen had said of him, endeavoured to make amends by composing a romance replete with wit, entitled *Repentance*. The Viscountess de Castellane undertook to present it to the Queen, but Her Majesty kept her word, and would never look at it.

END OF CHAP. I.


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